PLANTING IDEAS • BEAUTIFUL GARDENS • EXPERT ADVICE

GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

AUTUMN'S INKY TONES

Late season foliage
in a Cotswold garden

A kaleidoscope of perennials
in a Belgium garden

Precise and painterly combinations
in New York State

FLAVOUR OF THE GARDEN
CHOOSING AND GROWING
APPLES FOR TASTE

at Gravetye Manor

Best plants for October
and where to see them

26 SPECIES PELARGONIUMS
for colour and fragrance

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editor's letter

In the 1990s, a new wave of nurserymen, including Piet Oudolf and Cassian Schmidt, outlined a new way of planting that was all about form and texture and claimed never to think about colour. It challenged traditional ideas about what made an incredible garden, and the idea became mainstream. In this issue of *Gardens Illustrated*, we visit a garden designed by the Belgian nurseryman Jan Spruyt that references many of these ideas, but that is a kaleidoscope of colour. A masterclass in clever combinations, at this time of year it's full of autumn's bruised tones (page 76).

Landcraft, on Long Island, New York State, are gardens with a precise and painterly planting approach. Writer and plantsman Daniel J Hinkley visits the nurserymen-owners Dennis Schrader and Bill Smith (page 34), and shares 24 of their favourite late-season plants.

Our gardening talent this month is Will Smithson, head gardener at South Wood Farm in Devon and @solegardener on Instagram. He regularly posts wonderful pictures of his work. Current theme: warm colour. He explains how increasingly he is using the social media site as a source of inspiration for his work (page 31).

October = colour for maximalists.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Lucy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

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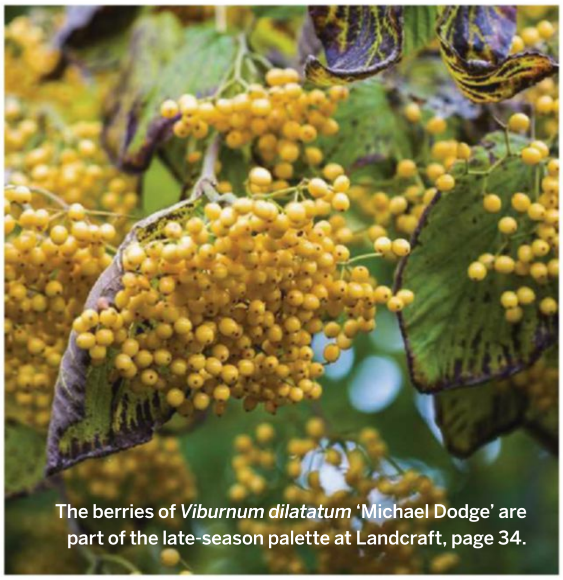
Colour rules in a prairie-style garden designed by Jan Spruyt that makes the most of each season's palette, page 76.



The berries of *Viburnum dilatatum* 'Michael Dodge' are part of the late-season palette at Landcraft, page 34.

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Plantsman and head gardener at Great Dixter in East Sussex.

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Garden designer, plantsman and columnist.

MODESTE HERWIG, CLAIRE TAKACS

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Gravetye Manor
Photograph by
Andrew Montgomery

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DIANNA JAZWINSKI, CLAIRE TAKACS

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- Save on collections of **species and scented pelargoniums** from Woottens of Wenhaston** – page 104
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contributors

DANIEL J HINKLEY

Daniel is an author, lecturer and consultant, who lives and gardens in the USA. He's currently busy directing the renovation of his first garden, Heronswood, now owned by the Port Gamble S'Kllalam Tribe. On page 34 he travels to New York to visit a stunning garden on Long Island he knows well.

"There is a palpable excitement to the garden of Dennis Schrader and Bill Smith that compels me to return time and again."

JEREMY PELZER

TOM COWARD

Kew-trained Tom spent three years as assistant to Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter. He is now head gardener at Gravetye Manor in West Sussex where he is able to indulge his passion for growing fruit, and on page 70 he explains how he is preserving Gravetye's historic apples.

"I love the astonishing variation of flavours it's possible to grow, and I find the trees beautiful plants in their own right."

MODESTE HERWIG

Dutch photographer Modeste has been taking pictures of gardens since she was 15. Her pictures have appeared in magazines and books around the world and on page 76 you can see her photographs of a beautifully planted Belgium garden designed by Jan Spruyt.

"I immediately fell in love with the planting, and the black-and-grey front of the house made a dramatic backdrop."

RICHARD MABEY

Richard is the author of some 40 books, many of them about plants and all, especially the latest, *The Cabaret of Plants*, celebrating the independence and inventiveness of the natural world. On page 68 you can read the last of his musings about his wilful garden in south Norfolk.

"In this last piece I wanted to stress that there are no negative dynamics in nature. Even decay creates new patterns of growth."

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EAT NATURAL'S PIONEER BEEKEEPERS 2016/2017

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GET BUZZY

Want to boost bee activity in your garden?
Eat Natural has the answer!

This year, snack bar producer Eat Natural, working in collaboration with the British Beekeepers Association, is stepping up its campaign to support the nation's beekeeping heritage and create a new generation of beekeepers. Building on the success of last year's *Pollenation* project, which saw 25 'new bees' trained and equipped, Eat Natural is searching for 50 more would-be beekeepers.

"Beekeeping is a wonderful pastime," says Jane Moseley, who looks after *Pollenation* at Eat Natural, "but getting started isn't cheap. The *Pollenation* ethos is to create a community from people who want to take up the craft but haven't had the chance." Entrants can sign up online and the lucky winners will be presented with a state-of-the-art Eat Natural hive and all the necessary beekeeping kit to go with it.

Researchers studying bee populations are also *Pollenation* fans. Cutting-edge 'bee-listening technology' built into every hive sends complex data to beekeepers and scientists analysing hive health, making *Pollenation* the nation's biggest bee-analysing project!

NICKY WATTERSON, KEEN GARDENER FROM THE ISLE OF MAN

Nicky has loved welcoming her bees. "It's been a steep learning curve but every minute is great fun. Watching them forage is mesmerising, and has changed the way I garden. When my leeks went to seed this summer, I left the flower heads to open rather than pulling them out. The bees loved them!"

Nicky is enthusiastic about Eat Natural's quest to build its beekeeping community. "It's such a great opportunity. Handling the bees can seem daunting at first but once the mentors have helped you master it, it's easy. I'd quite happily have 100 hives now; I love it!"

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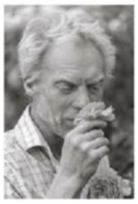
If you love the perfume of roses on an early summer's day and have always longed to discover more of this vast and varied genus, this four-day tour will let you indulge in all things rose related. You'll be welcomed into some wonderful gardens, not least of which is the outstanding **David Austin show garden** collection, plus a behind-the-scenes, private view of David Austin's own garden. Austin's expertise is world-renowned and his emphasis on roses with fragrance and old garden character has won him many devotees.

Also featured on the tour are **Powis Castle**, **Coughton Court**, **Ragley Hall** and **Wollerton Old Hall**, all fantastic gardens with abundant rose displays.

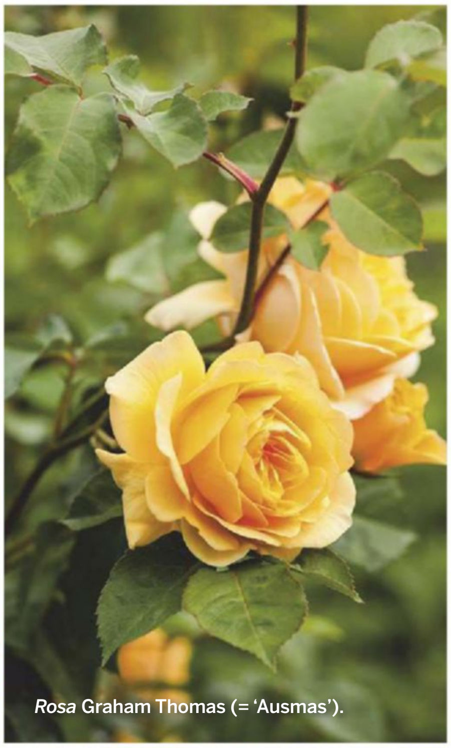
The tour includes a visit to tour leader Michael Marriott's own new garden and an opportunity to meet author and gardener Katherine Swift at her garden at **Morville Hall**, where she will talk about her forthcoming book, *A Rose for Morville*.

Join us on this fascinating tour to visit beautiful gardens, discuss the merits of underplanting roses, mulching, pruning, budding, training, and above all celebrate the rose: doyenne of the English garden.



TOUR LEADER

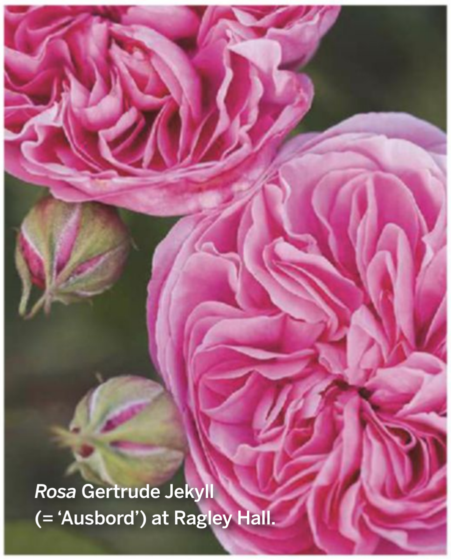
Michael Marriott has worked at David Austin Roses, designing and advising, for the past 30 years. He is an expert on all matters relating to roses, from the extensive range of cultivars and types to successful growing.



Rosa Graham Thomas (= 'Ausmas').

Rosa gallica 'Versicolor' in Coughton Court's rose garden.

Orangery terrace at Powis Castle.



Rosa Gertrude Jekyll (= 'Ausbord') at Ragley Hall.

Katherine Swift alongside a fragrant *Rosa* 'Fantin-Latour' at Morville Hall.

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What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

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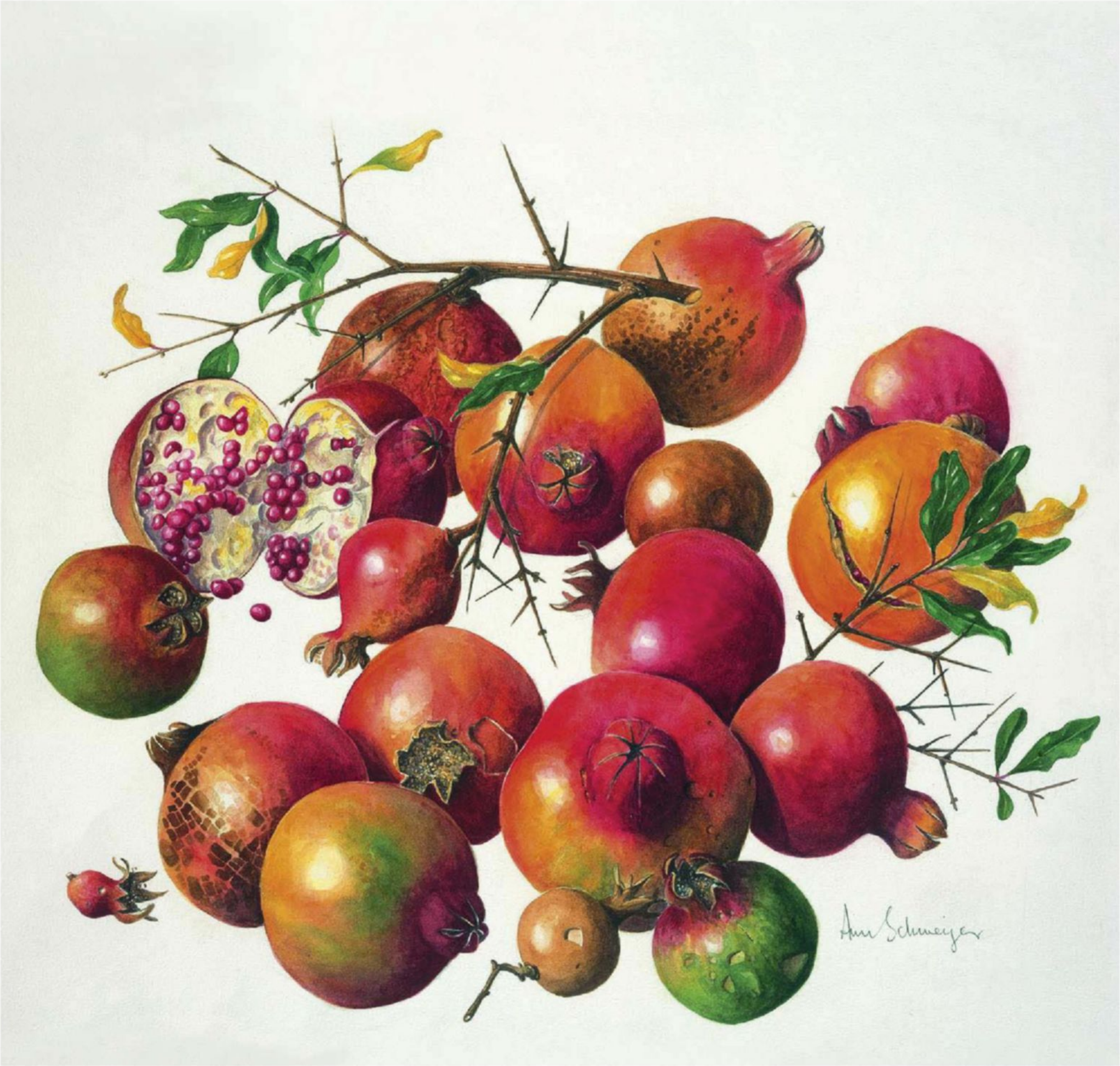

ANN SCHWEIZER *POMEGRANATES*, THE SHIRLEY SHERWOOD GALLERY OF BOTANICAL ART

EXHIBITION

Seeds of change

As gardens fill with the sculptural beauty of seedheads, a new exhibition opens at the Shirley Sherwood Gallery dedicated to the seed in all its glory. *Abundance: Seeds, Pods and Autumn Fruits*, explores how artists have interpreted the different, and sometimes bizarre, ways seeds are distributed, and features detailed botanical paintings of plants from around the world, including Ann Schweizer's *Pomegranates Punica granatum* (shown above). Many are the culmination of months of observation, waiting for fruit to ripen.

• Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE. 7 October to 11 March, 10am-5.30pm (closes at 3.45pm from 30 October). Entry to the gallery is included in the admission fee to the gardens. **kew.org**

Falling for foliage

Autumn's amazing colour palette makes October and November the best months for a woodland walk. And if you're looking for inspiration there are hundreds of routes you can download from the National Trust website, such as a trail through the beech, oak and lime trees of the Ashridge Estate in Hertfordshire (pictured) or the ancient tree walk at Petworth Park in West Sussex where you can marvel at some of the oldest and largest trees in the country, including a 1,000-year-old oak. See route details for distance, time and accessibility. **nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/woodland-walks**

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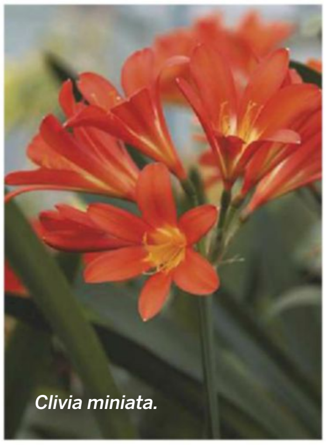
Held for prosperity

Plant Heritage has awarded National Plant Collection status to seven new plant collections. The new holders are: Anne Milner for John D Taylor's dwarf irises; Bowdens, which holds a duplicate of the Fulchers' *Agapanthus* collection; Hoyland Plant Centre for *Clivia* species; Myddelton House Garden for *Ruscus*; Megginch Castle for both Scottish cider apples and Scottish heritage apples and pears; and the Nymans Collection, which focuses on plants bred at, or named after Nymans or people connected to the garden. **plantheritage.com**



Clivia miniata.

FESTIVAL

Another bite of the apple

The much-loved Apple Day at RHS Garden Rosemoor has been extended this year so visitors can enjoy a whole weekend of apple-themed events. See wonderful apple displays and taste unusual cultivars, plus have your own apples identified and find planting and cultivation tips from on-site experts. You can also visit the brand-new Devon Heritage Apple Orchard; a highlight of the garden's autumn trail. 8-9 October, 10am-5pm. Usual garden admission applies and includes all apple festival activities. **rhs.org.uk/rosemoor**

HELPING HAND

Hedgehogs are out and about preparing for hibernation and gardeners can lend a helping hand with the new hedgehog gift box from subscription box company Boxwild. The box contains two packs of nutritious hedgehog mix, a mealworm food pack, feeding bowl and scoop. A box costs £21 and 50p from each sale is donated to wildlife charities in the UK. ***boxwild.com***

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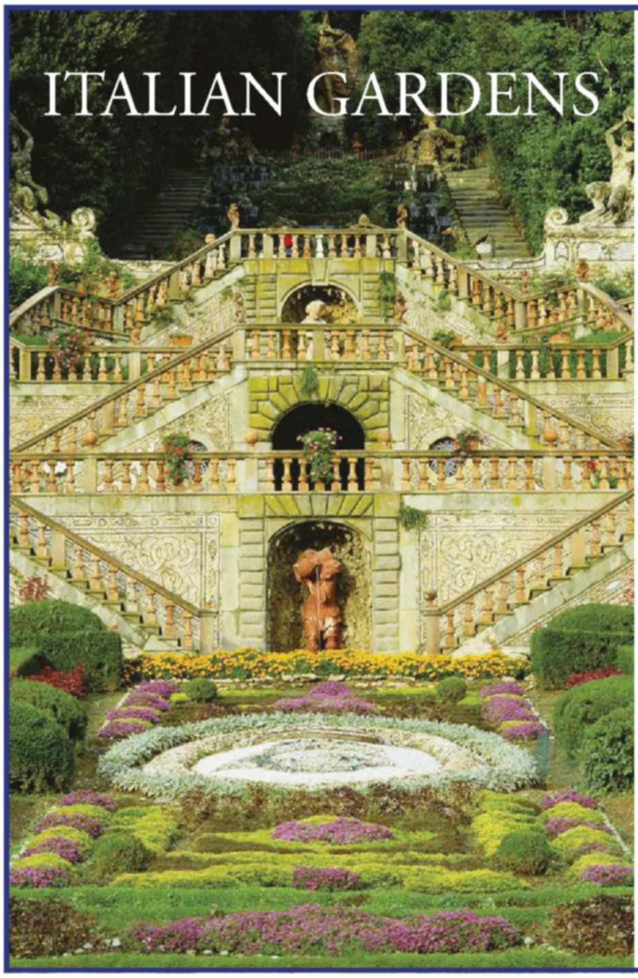

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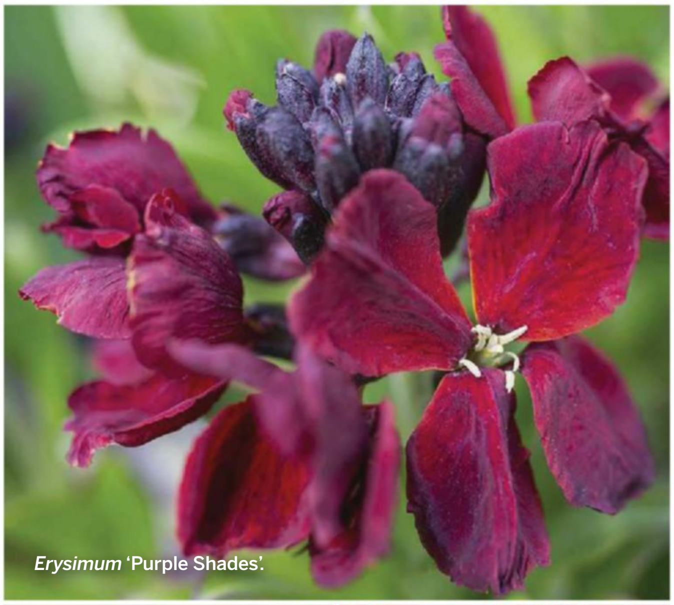
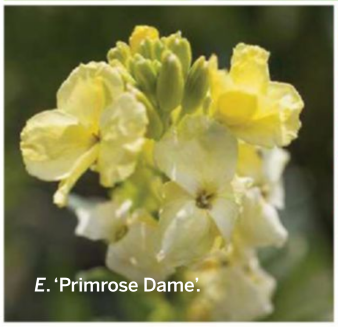
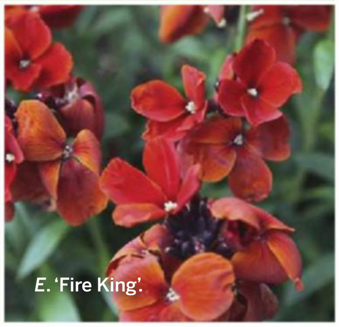


Erysimum 'Purple Shades'.



E. 'Primrose Dame'.

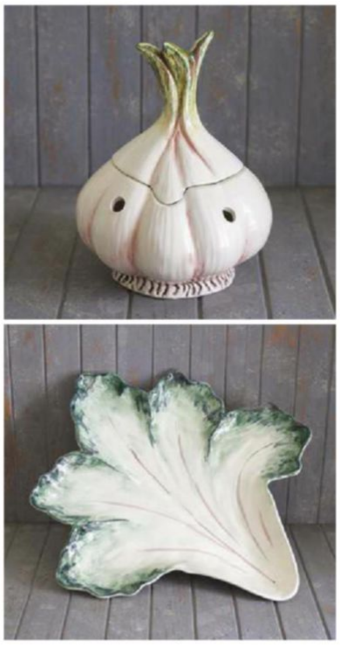


E. 'Fire King'.

WHAT TO PLANT NOW

Perks of seeing a wallflower

Wallflowers, with their rich colours, are a wonderful sight in spring both in the border or a container – and now is the time to plant out biennial types to give them a chance to establish. Online plant retailer, Crocus has put together a fabulous Persian Wallflower Collection of 30 bare root plants – made up of ten each of *Erysimum* 'Purple Shades', *E.* 'Primrose Dame' and *E.* 'Fire King' – priced at £14.97. **crocus.co.uk**



FROM PLOT TO PLATE

Look out for the new Potager Collection of vegetable-inspired, ceramic, serving and storage ware, from Catesby's. All pieces in the range, including this garlic cellar and chard platter, are handmade in Tuscany. Prices start at £25. ***catesbys.co.uk***

Diary

Create seasonal displays with celebrity florist Shane Connolly at his London studio.

- **Autumn Food Festival**

Sample some of the best regional produce and get growing advice at RHS Garden Hyde Hall's Food Festival. 7-8 October, 10am-4pm. Normal garden admission applies. RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Creephedge Lane, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8ET. Tel 0845 2658071, rhs.org.uk

- **Floral Workshop with Shane Connolly**

Learn to create seasonal designs in the style of the Dutch Masters with celebrity florist Shane Connolly on a series of one-day workshops in October and November. From 12 October, 11am-3pm, £325. Unit 7, Latimer Road Industrial Estate, Latimer Road, London W10 6RQ. Tel 020 8964 4398, shaneconnolly.co.uk

- **Shakespeare and Gardens**

Explore the use and meaning of plants in Shakespeare's plays and poetry, and the Bard's links to well-known gardens in this fascinating talk by Twigs Way. 13 October, 10am-1pm, £35. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk

- **The Importance of Herbs**

Join Judith Hann, former TV presenter and author of new book *Herbs*, for a supper talk on the importance of herbs in the garden and kitchen. 19 October, 7-8.15pm, £17. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HS. Tel 020 7352 5646, chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

- **Westonbirt Fair**

As well as 120 stall holders, workshops and book signings, this year's charity event welcomes Val Bourne, who will discuss the benefits of chemical-free gardening. 24-25 October, 10am-5pm. £7.50 online, or £8 on the door. Westonbirt School, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QG. Tel 01453 832265, westonbirtfair.org

- **Glory of the Garden: 90 Years of the NGS**

To mark the 90th anniversary of the National Garden Scheme, journalist Stephen Lacey, baking supremo Mary Berry and Lord Ashbrook will be in discussion at the Royal Geographical Society, London. 31 October, 6-8.30pm, £20. Royal Geographical Society, London SW7 2AR. Tel 01483 211535, ngs.org.uk

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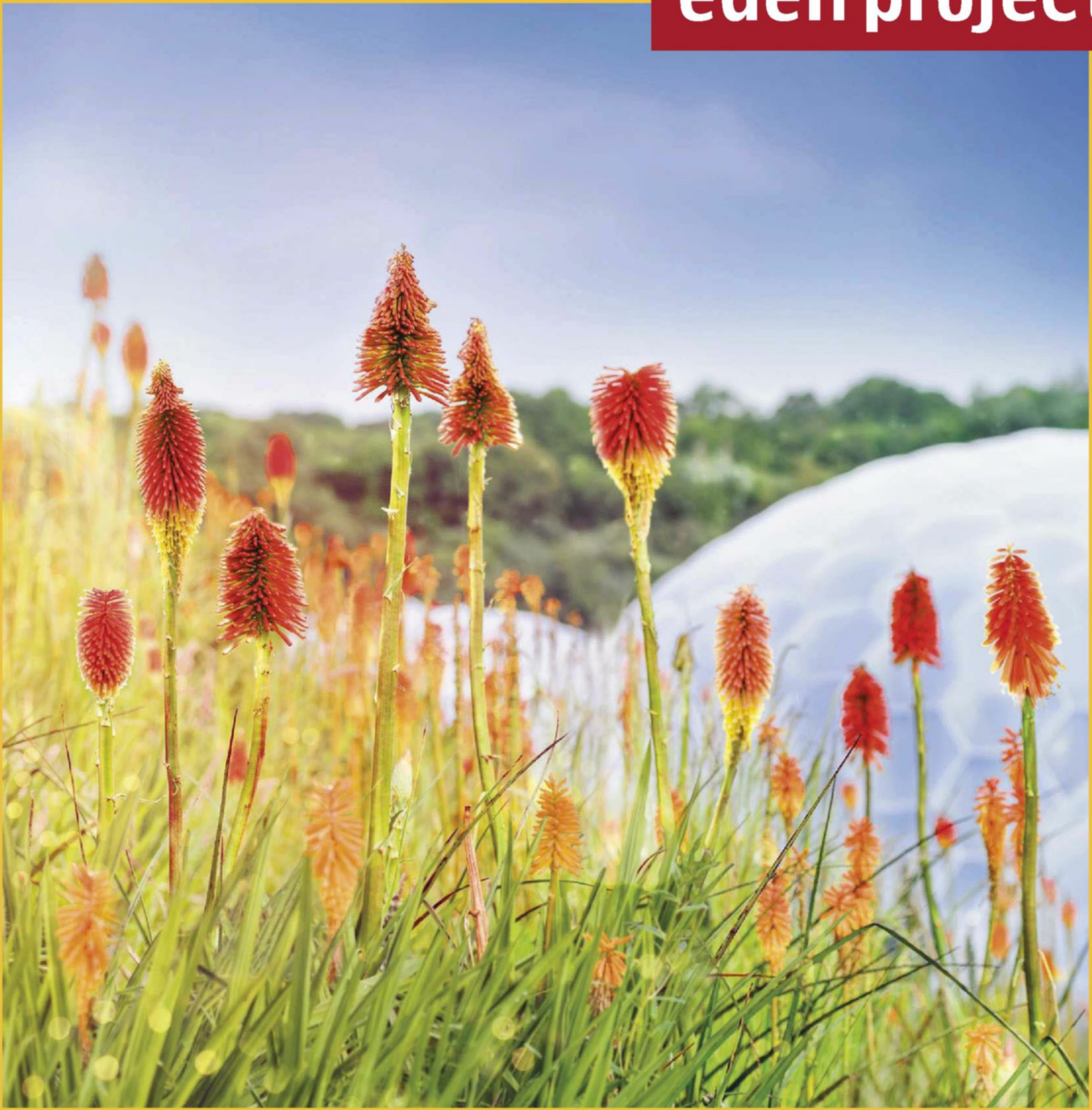
eden project



BRIGHT SPARKS LIGHT UP EDEN

This season at the Eden Project, discover ‘Bright Sparks’, a fiery display of red-hot pokers flourishing on a precipitous slope overlooking Eden’s famous Biomes. There are now 125 different species and cultivars established in this bold area of planting, making it one of the largest collections in Europe. Look out for the vibrant orange *Kniphofia* ‘Nobilis’, and the metre-tall, bronze-yellow *Kniphofia* ‘Dingaan’ (named after a Zulu king) setting the gardens ablaze with colour.

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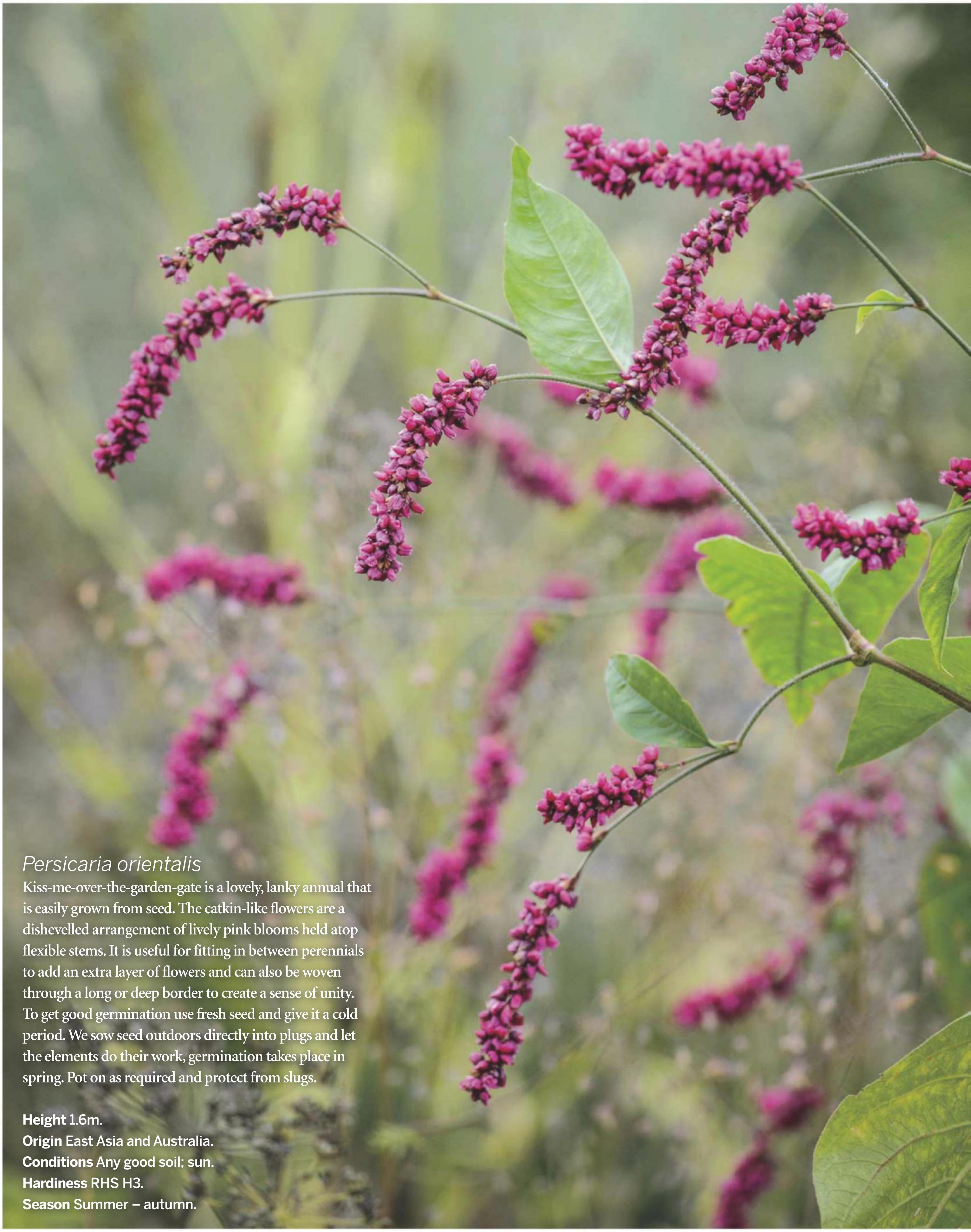
The Eden Project connects us with each other and the living world. Reg. charity no. 1093070 (The Eden Trust).



Persicaria orientalis

Kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate is a lovely, lanky annual that is easily grown from seed. The catkin-like flowers are a dishevelled arrangement of lively pink blooms held atop flexible stems. It is useful for fitting in between perennials to add an extra layer of flowers and can also be woven through a long or deep border to create a sense of unity. To get good germination use fresh seed and give it a cold period. We sow seed outdoors directly into plugs and let the elements do their work, germination takes place in spring. Pot on as required and protect from slugs.

Height 1.6m.
Origin East Asia and Australia.
Conditions Any good soil; sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season Summer – autumn.

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Mat Reese
is head gardener at Malverleys, a private garden in Hampshire.

October plants

Even as the season winds down, Mat's borders still have plenty of colour from long-flowering plants and autumn foliage, balanced by clean whites

WORDS MATTHEW REESE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Fuchsia magellanica 'Lady Bacon'

In smaller gardens, plants should earn their keep and fuchsias are particularly generous, flowering and sustaining a fresh appearance from late spring well into the depths of autumn. To keep them performing prune hard in the spring, feed with good, rich compost and protect against capsid bugs. The flowers are a pretty vignette of white sepals, an amethyst corolla with a fuchsia-pink tube and ovary. Blooms are produced at the tips of the new shoots so are easily reached by pollinating birds and insects.

Height 1.8m.
Origin Chile.
Conditions Any rich soil that is not saturated; full sun and part-shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.
Season Spring – autumn.

Dahlia 'Karma Naomi'

The Karma series was specifically bred for the cut flower industry to have strong, straight stems and to last indoors, which also makes the flowers a good choice for the garden. The blooms of *D.* 'Karma Naomi' are a glowing mahogany-red and are produced in succession until the first frosts. Although the stems are sturdy, support is still necessary, so position a stake at the back of each dahlia. To keep the show going into the autumn it is important to feed the plants, water generously and deadhead.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Garden.
Conditions Any good soil that is not too wet; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H1C.
Season Summer to autumn.

Leucanthemella serotina

In autumn, a display of clean-white flowers is a rare sight in the border and the autumn ox-eye daisy is a useful antidote to the predominant asters and helianthus. It starts flowering in early October and produces sprays of large, chalk-white daisies with narrow petals and attractive green-yellow centres. The strong stems need no staking and although a passenger in the border for much of the year, it remains tidy, even in wet, windy weather. The flowers are also good for cutting. Split clumps every three to four years to keep vigour and replant into improved soil. AGM*.

Height 1.8m.
Origin Eastern Europe into central Asia.
Conditions Good soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.
Season Autumn.

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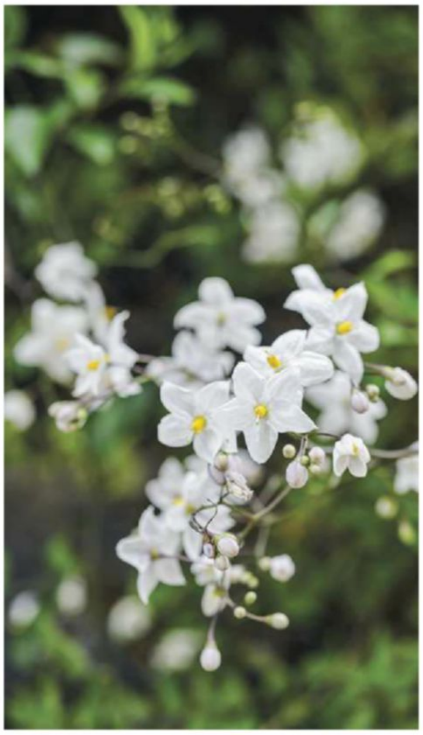
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Solanum laxum 'Album'

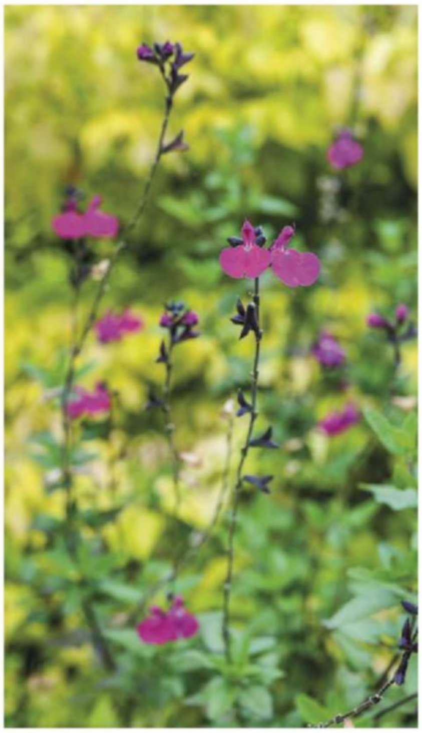
You can treat this climber like a fuchsia by cutting the stringy growth hard back to strong stems in the spring. This will keep it in check and encourage new growth on which the flowers are produced. The clear-white flowers are held in lax clusters and are reminiscent of potato flowers. They are produced well into the winter – and even through the winter in the mildest districts. You can grow it up a wall or it also does very well trained up a chestnut pole in borders from where its rangy new growth can drape over and through neighbouring plants. AGM.

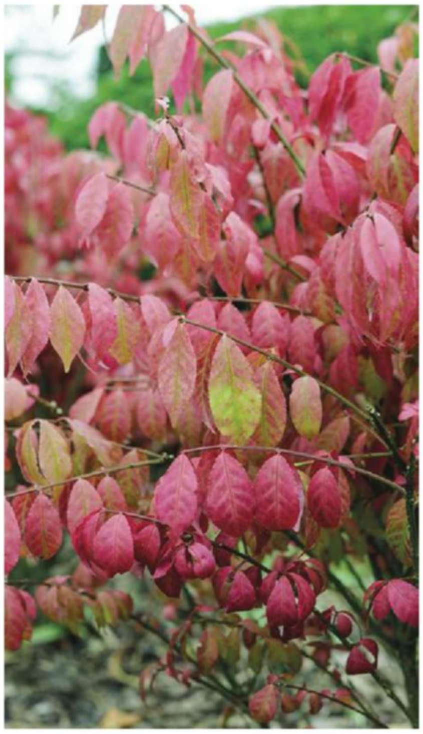
Height 5m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Good soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season Summer – autumn.

Salvia microphylla 'Cerro Potosí'

This tough salvia has been holding its own in the garden in quite heavy soil for the past five years where it is sandwiched between a *Cornus controversa* 'Candlelight' and a clump of *Hemerocallis*. Come spring it looks a little sad, but with a light prune to tidy it up and encourage new growth, it quietly recovers and goes on to produce a wonderful show through the summer well into autumn. The vivid, magenta flowers are small but numerous and carried on stiff twigs well above the scented foliage. AGM.

Height 1.3m.
Origin Mexico.
Conditions Any rich soil that is not saturated; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season Summer – autumn.





Euonymus alatus 'Compactus'

I came across this form of the winged spindle many years ago at the New York Botanical Garden where it was used as a hedge. Even in the spectacular US 'fall' it stood out with remarkable crimson autumn colouring. During my student tenure at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, I became more familiar with the plant growing in the rock garden where every autumn it coloured brilliantly no matter the weather. One of the best shrubs for autumn colour, lasting around three weeks, before painting the ground red with fallen leaves. AGM.

Height 2m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any rich soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
Season Autumn.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Westonbirt, the National Arboretum.

CHRISTOPHER NICHOLSON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Autumn is the best time to plant most trees and **BlueBell Arboretum & Nursery** is a great source of inspiration. Its vast range includes the usual contenders and some special rare-as-hens'-teeth trees exclusive to the nursery. It is also home to an interesting arboretum with an extensive collection of trees and shrubs. The knowledgeable staff will happily advise you as to the best tree for any site. BlueBell Arboretum & Nursery, Annwell Lane, Smisby, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 2TA. Tel 01530 413700, bluebellnursery.com

Westonbirt, the National Arboretum has a remarkable collection of trees from all over the world, with many huge specimens and planting that started in

Tibouchina urvilleana

This conservatory plant does particularly well if given an airing during the warmer months. In our Exotic Garden it yields a continuous display of papal-purple blooms, from velvety buds, arranged in loose panicles. Prune to keep compact and manageable and regenerate new plants from semi-ripe cuttings every three to four years. Cuttings can be taken at any time of year, though summer is best. Bring back indoors before the first frost and pot on into a good loam-based compost. A good cut flower, but beware, the fallen petals can stain.

Height 2m.
Origin Brazil.
Conditions Full sun in a summer garden; winter in conservatory.
Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.
Season Year round.

Impatiens tinctoria

This huge busy lizzie makes a rounded mound of fleshy foliage to over 2m tall and will flower from late summer until the frosts of winter draw the show to a close. It has large, exotic-looking, night-scented, white flowers, each with a maroon mark. The flowers have the most interesting spur – the long, nectar-filled tube that emerges from the flower – that can be up to 10cm long. It is a hardy tuberous perennial although it is wise to insulate the crown during the winter months with a thick mulch in colder regions of the UK. Feed in spring.

Height 2m.
Origin Eastern Africa.
Conditions Any rich soil not too dry; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7b-11.
Season Summer – autumn.

Rosa For Your Eyes Only (= 'Cheweyesup')

It has long been the ambition of rose breeders to incorporate the dark eye of the wild Persian rose, which hails from Iran and Afghanistan, into a healthy garden rose. Decades of work have come to fruition with this new group of roses that exhibit the unusual dark eye. This has loose clusters of mauve-pink flowers with a darker central eye; in cool weather the flowers produced are of deeper shades. It makes a dense shrub that flowers through summer, well into autumn and has clean, disease-free foliage.

Height 1m.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Any rich soil that is not too wet in winter; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season Summer – autumn.

the 1850s and continues to this day. October is the best month for autumn colour especially the Japanese maples and liquidambars. Westonbirt, the National Arboretum, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QS. Tel 0300 067 4890, forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt

Another garden with an arboretum that is very good in the autumn is the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**. This has to be one of the finest and most historic collections of trees in the world. The collections hail from all four corners of the world and many were first introductions, some plantings date back to 1762. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

The culmination of the horticultural year is celebrated at the **RHS Autumn Garden Show** at Lawrence and Lindley Halls in London. Here there will be displays of late-season flowers, autumn colour and floristry. There will also be a number of speciality nurseries offering a wide range of plants and lectures. RHS Lawrence Hall, London SW1P 2QD. RHS Lindley Hall, London SW1P 2QW. Tel 020 3176 5800, rhs.org.uk

JULIAN WEIGALL

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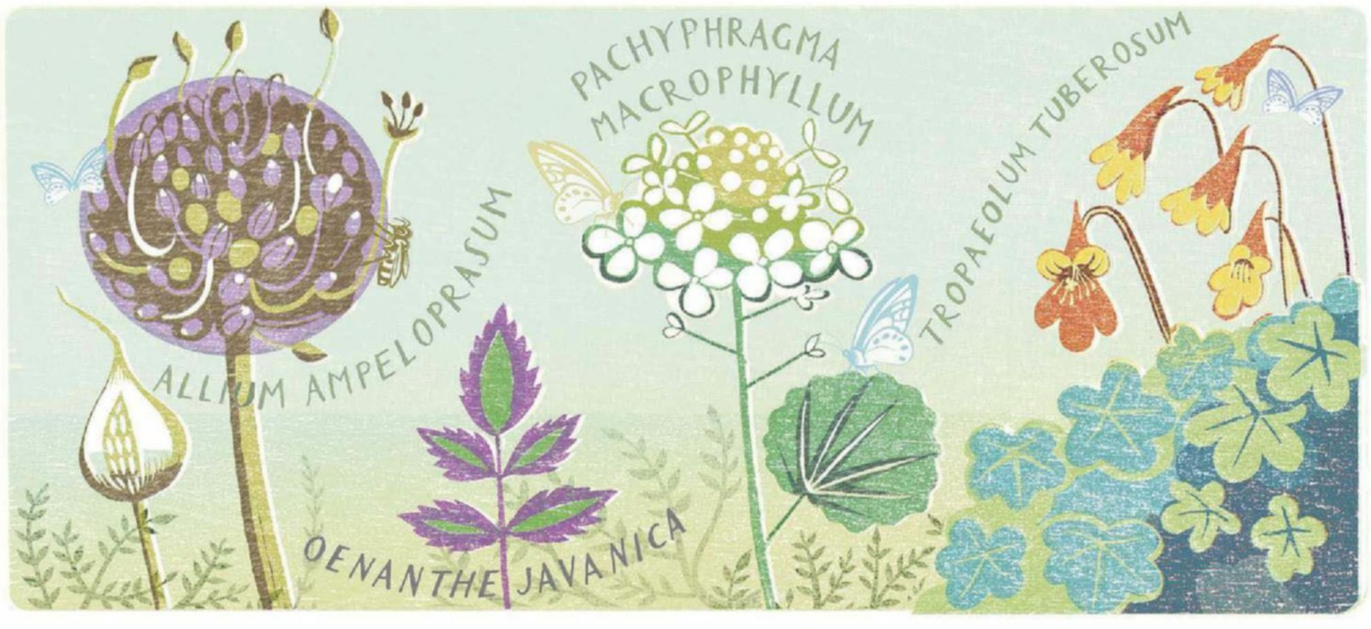

IN THE GARDEN

As autumnn takes hold, Jojo is taking things slowly and wonders if perhaps she should try something new when it comes to growing food?

WORDS JOJO TULLOH ILLUSTRATIONS SARAH YOUNG

Slow Food, the movement that started in Italy in the 1980s, began as a reaction to bland, globalised fast food. The big idea, which has since spread around the world, was to promote gastronomic pleasure through regional variety and traditional cooking techniques. In the UK, the Slow Food Movement's Ark of Taste (slowfood.org.uk) highlights UK rare breeds and cultivars, starting with 'Allington Pippin' and ending with Yorkshire forced rhubarb. It's a way of encouraging us all to both relish what's individual about the place we're in and help to preserve a wide range of foods for the future. This idea of seeking out the unusual for the long term led me to the concept of slow gardening. By which I mean planting the kind of edibles that will be with you for years. These include all the common allotment favourites, apples, plums, red and blackcurrants, cardoons, globe artichokes, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes and horseradish. But what about nut trees and unusual perennial vegetables too?

Annual vegetables sown, grown and harvested in a single season are a fairly inefficient way of growing food if you think about all the effort it takes and the hours you spend cultivating the plants, only for them to be pulled up and composted at the end of the season. By contrast trees and perennial plants will provide you with crops from year to year and more time to enjoy your garden. The more unusual perennials, which you'll find in specialist nurseries, such as Crûg Farm (crug-farm.co.uk) and Edulis (edulis.co.uk), are often as attractive as they are delicious, so if you think you lack both time and space to grow your own food, try mixing some of these into your borders:

***Allium ampeloprasum* var. *babingtonii*.** Easily raised from seed this perennial, clump-forming leek grows to a height of 1.5m with large flower heads that are a mixture of deep-purple flowers and bulbils. Scatter the bulbils at the end of the season for next year's crop.

***Tropaeolum tuberosum* var. *lineamaculatum* 'Ken Aslet'.** A half-hardy, herbaceous perennial climber that is usually grown for its striking, bright-orange, trumpet-shaped flowers. Its tubers, commonly called *mashua*, are a traditional Andean root vegetable, eaten boiled.

***Oenanthe javanica* 'Flamingo'.** This low-growing umbellifer is more commonly grown as an ornamental for its pink-edged leaves, but when young the steamed leaves have the flavour of carrots.

***Pachyphragma macrophyllum*.** From Turkey and the Caucasus comes this charming, shade-loving, perennial brassica (a bit like hedge mustard), with rosettes of bright-green leaves and masses of white flowers in early spring. Use tender leaves in salads or stir-fries.

WHAT TO DO NOW

Now is a good time to order nut trees to plant over winter. The most reliable croppers are walnuts, chestnuts and hazelnuts, and you'll find plenty of choice at the Agroforestry Research Trust (agroforestry.co.uk), including the Japanese walnut, called the heart nut because its nuts are heart shaped in cross section. For smaller gardens, hazelnuts or cobnuts are best. They can be grown as individual open trees for increased nut harvest or as useful sheltering hedges. For an edible but ornamental garden plant, 'Red Filbert' is a fast growing, heavy cropper with reddish-bronze leaves, or 'Kentish Cob' is another good cropper, with medium-sized nuts. Pollination of hazelnut trees is not that straightforward so be sure to plant at least two cultivars that are compatible pollinators.

IN THE KITCHEN

October's nut crops remind Jojo of the flavours of southern Europe and are the inspiration for a delicious sauce for beans

In this country we're used to adding nuts to cakes, biscuits and puddings, but in Spain and Italy they're also frequently used to thicken savoury sauces and add layers of flavour and texture. One of my favourite sauces is the Spanish *romesco* made with red peppers, garlic and hazelnuts, which goes wonderfully with braised leeks or seafood. However, I've recently become addicted to another red sauce: *pesto alla trapanese*. Pesto made with garlic, basil and pine nuts comes from the Italian town of Genoa; sailors from the port took the recipe to Trapani in Sicily where the locals adapted it to suit the ingredients to hand (ripe tomatoes and almonds) and *pesto alla trapanese* was born. It's most commonly eaten with pasta but is also very good as a sauce for green beans (see below). If you've decided to plant a hazelnut or cobnut tree (see previous page) you won't have your own crop for a couple of years but many farmers' markets sell them at this time of year. Try them in the recipe below for granola with dried, white mulberries.

RECIPES

Cobnut and mulberry granola

- **50g cobnuts (weigh when shelled)**
- **500g jumbo porridge oats**
- **3tbsp golden syrup**
- **200ml date syrup**
- **30g linseeds**
- **30g pumpkin seeds**
- **50g dried white mulberries**
- **50g currants**
- **4tbsp vegetable oil**
- **Pinch of salt**

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Crack the cobnuts and spread them out on a baking tray. Roast until dark brown in colour and smelling pleasantly nutty (about 15 minutes). Pour into a clean tea towel and rub to get rid of as much skin as you can. Chop roughly then put the cobnuts into a large mixing bowl with the oats, syrups, seeds, salt and oil. Stir with a spatula until the oats are evenly coated so no dry patches remain. Line a baking tray with parchment and spread the mixture out evenly. Bake in the oven for about 20-25 minutes, stirring the mixture gently after 10 minutes (I use a chopstick) so the outer edges do not cook too quickly. When crisp enough turn the oven off and leave the granola to dry in the oven as it cools to crisp. When cool roll the parchment over the granola and press down to break into pieces, mix in the dried fruits and store in an airtight jar. Eat with milk for breakfast or as a topping for yoghurt and fruit.

Green beans with *pesto alla trapanese*

- **1tsp sea salt**
- **1-2 garlic cloves**
- **1 bunch basil (approx 50g)**
- **30g raw almonds**
- **30g parmesan or pecorino, freshly grated**
- **200g baby plum or cherry tomatoes**
- **400g fresh green beans, topped and tailed**
- **Black pepper**

For this recipe you'll need to use a ripe and flavoursome tomato. Grind the sea salt, garlic and basil into a paste. Toss the almonds into a pan of boiling water for a few minutes, then drain and slip them out of their skins. Heat the oven to 150°C/Gas 2, rub a baking tray with olive oil and tip the almonds on to it. Roast the nuts until they are golden brown (20-25 minutes), allow to cool, then pulse to consistency of breadcrumbs in a food processor. Add the tomatoes and garlic paste and pulse again, until you have a thick, sloppy paste. Scrape into a bowl then add the cheese, grind in some black pepper and taste, add more salt if needed. Cook the beans in a pan of salted water until tender then drain. Toss the beans with the pesto and serve.

Plum toasts

This very rustic treat is half way between a pudding and a breakfast snack, the sort of simple food that works at any time of day when you want something sweet and filling. I made mine with small golden wild plums but any plum will do, as will apricots.

Serves 2

- **2 slices of fresh crusty white bread**
- **10 plums (approx)**
- **Granulated sugar (to taste)**
- **Cinnamon (optional)**

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Cut the bread and butter it generously. Stone the plums and halve them, then place cut side up on the bread, pressing them down a little. Sprinkle with sugar (and cinnamon if using) then place a piece of buttered parchment over the top and press down. Cook for about 30 minutes until the bread is golden and the plums have collapsed and are coated in syrupy juices. Eat with a dollop of cream. ☐

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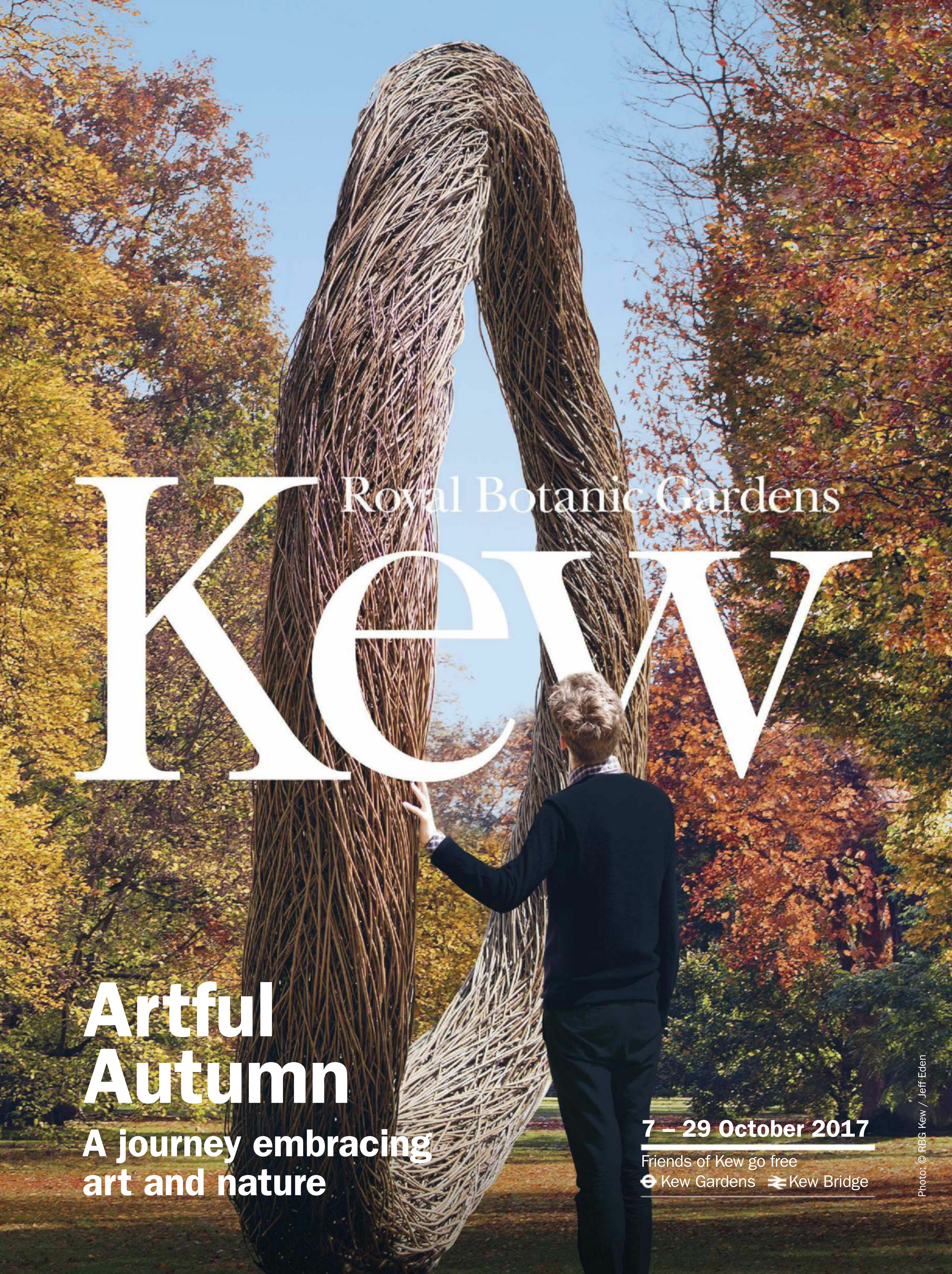

Kew
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Artful Autumn
A journey embracing art and nature

7 – 29 October 2017
Friends of Kew go free
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Photo: © RBG Kew / Jeff Eden

Will Smithson

An epiphany in New Zealand led to a career change for former recruitment consultant Will Smithson. He's now head gardener at South Wood Farm, designed by Arne Maynard

PORTRAIT JASON INGRAM

Earliest gardening memory I remember spending hours with my grandma on her farm, walking through the hay meadows and asking her to name all the different types of flowers and grasses.

Have you always worked as a gardener? I used to be an account manager for an IT recruitment company. I left after three years and moved to New Zealand with my now wife and, stunned by the beauty of the country, realised that whatever job I did next absolutely had to be outdoors. On my return I studied for my RHS qualifications at evening classes, and started work at Yeo Valley Organic Garden.

Horticultural heroes Charles Dowding for saving me from double digging! No dig is such a great ethos and one that should definitely be taken on board by more commercial growers.

Favourite garden Mapperton House in Dorset was the first garden I visited and I loved the whole atmosphere of the place. Especially the contrast between the informal banks of ox-eye daisies and the formality of all the clipped yew topiary that they have there.

Most valuable training I spent a day learning propagation with Marina Christopher, from Phoenix Perennial Plants and my success rate in all areas from seed germination to cuttings taking root improved greatly.

Favourite planting style Arts and Crafts-style gardens with their mix of topiary and herbaceous borders, as well as the use of natural materials wherever possible.

If you had to leave your garden in a hurry, what one plant would you take with you? I'd currently struggle without *Phlox paniculata* 'Cool of the Evening' in the borders. However, if I was in a real hurry I'd grab a pot of *Pelargonium sidoides*.

Points of inspiration I now find I'm using Instagram more as a source of inspiration. I follow lots of other gardeners and designers as well as interior designers and crafts people from around the world. Debby Tenquist and Claus Dalby are my two favourites giving an insight into a range of different garden styles.

Next big project you'll be tackling in the garden We're about to start work on a knot garden, using a combination of yew and osmanthus.

Contact williamjamessmithson@gmail.com or @solegardener on Instagram. South Wood Farm is in Devon and opens for the National Gardens Scheme, ngs.co.uk. Visitors also welcome by appointment.

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Wild at heart
This Long Island garden in New York State, with its mix of wild and precise planting, challenges established ideas about plant hardiness
In brief
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GARDENS
ILLUSTRATED

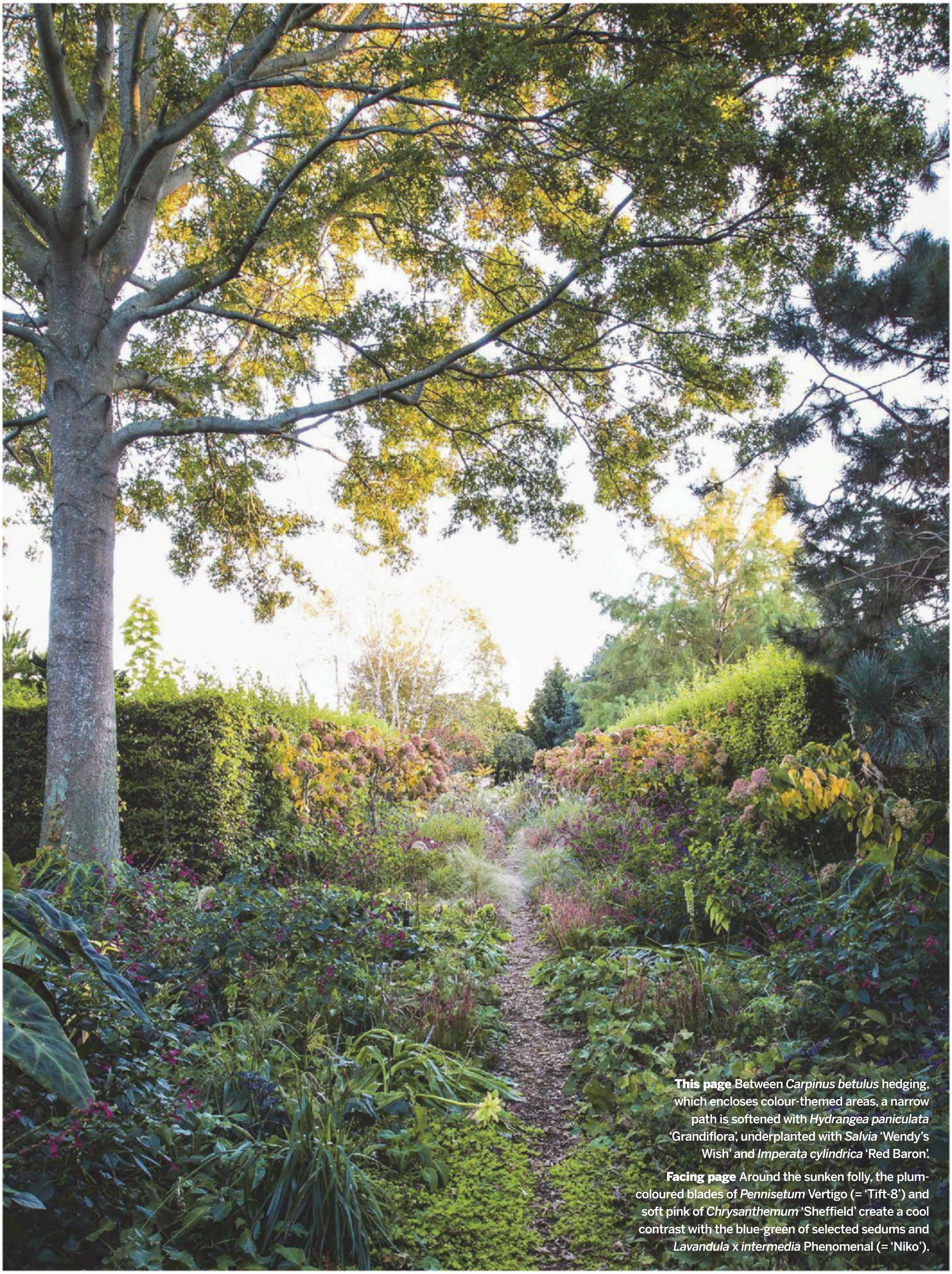
Wild at heart

This Long Island garden in New York State, with its mix of wild and precise planting, challenges established ideas about plant hardiness

WORDS DANIEL J HINKLEY PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

In brief

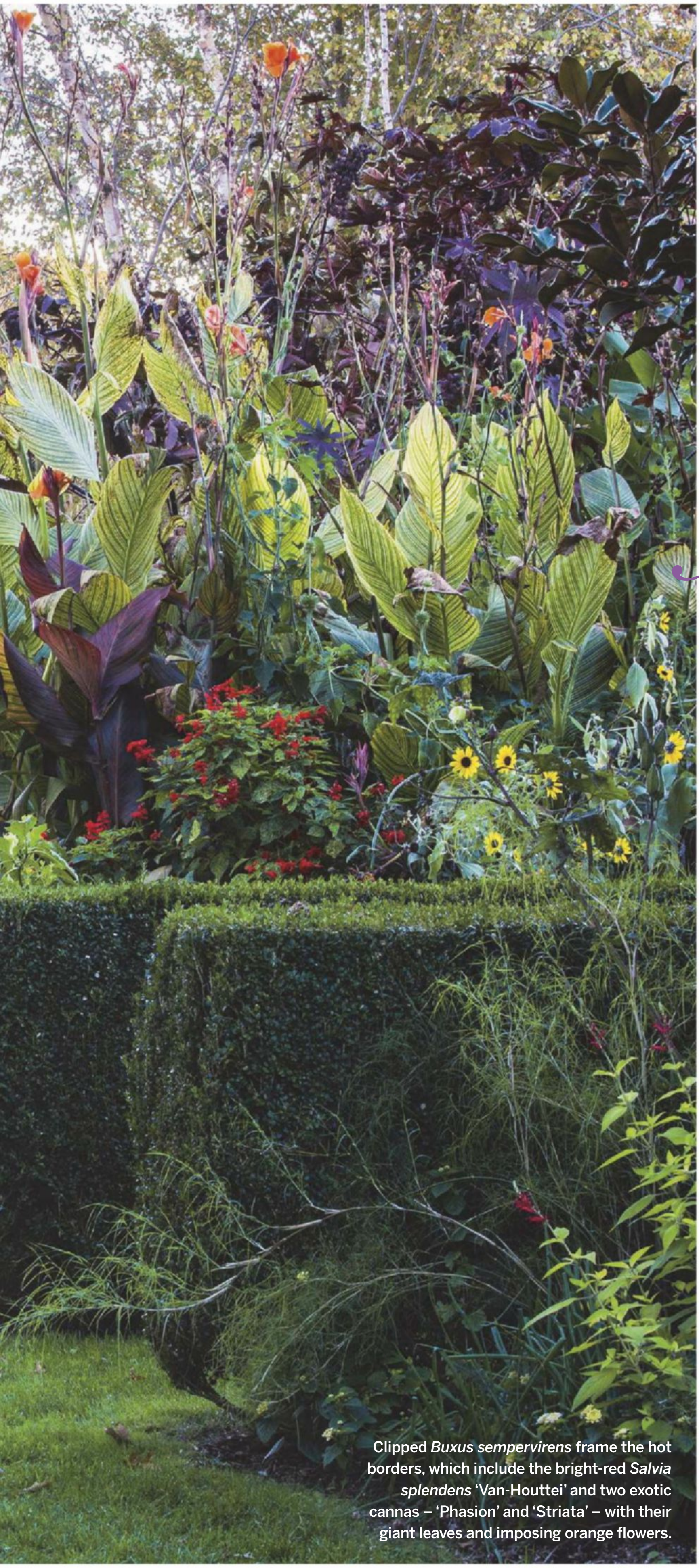
Name The Gardens at Landcraft.
What An imaginative and creative plant-driven garden, using a vast palette of hardy and tropical species.
Where Mattituck, New York State, USA.
Size Three acres.
Soil Rich loamy clay over sand, pH6.7.
Climate Warm and humid summers, very cold winters.
Hardiness rating USDA 6.



This page Between *Carpinus betulus* hedging, which encloses colour-themed areas, a narrow path is softened with *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora', underplanted with *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish' and *Imperata cylindrica* 'Red Baron'.

Facing page Around the sunken folly, the plum-coloured blades of *Pennisetum* Vertigo (= 'Tift-8') and soft pink of *Chrysanthemum* 'Sheffield' create a cool contrast with the blue-green of selected sedums and *Lavandula* x *intermedia* Phenomenal (= 'Niko').

"I like to have more manicured and designed areas close to the house; further away the garden is more relaxed and less specialised"



Clipped *Buxus sempervirens* frame the hot borders, which include the bright-red *Salvia splendens* 'Van-Houttei' and two exotic cannas – 'Phasion' and 'Striata' – with their giant leaves and imposing orange flowers.

Garden creators, Dennis Schrader, left, and Bill Smith.

Although it may be considered an oversimplification by some, I find that gardens generally fit one of two moulds. There are those that have been designed to be admired from their perimeter, as if peering into a diorama. And there are those, more satisfying in my mind, that are meant to be experienced from within. One, the sterile reception room with furniture not intended for sitting and the other, the cosy den with overstuffed chairs and a friendly inventory of oft-used artefacts.

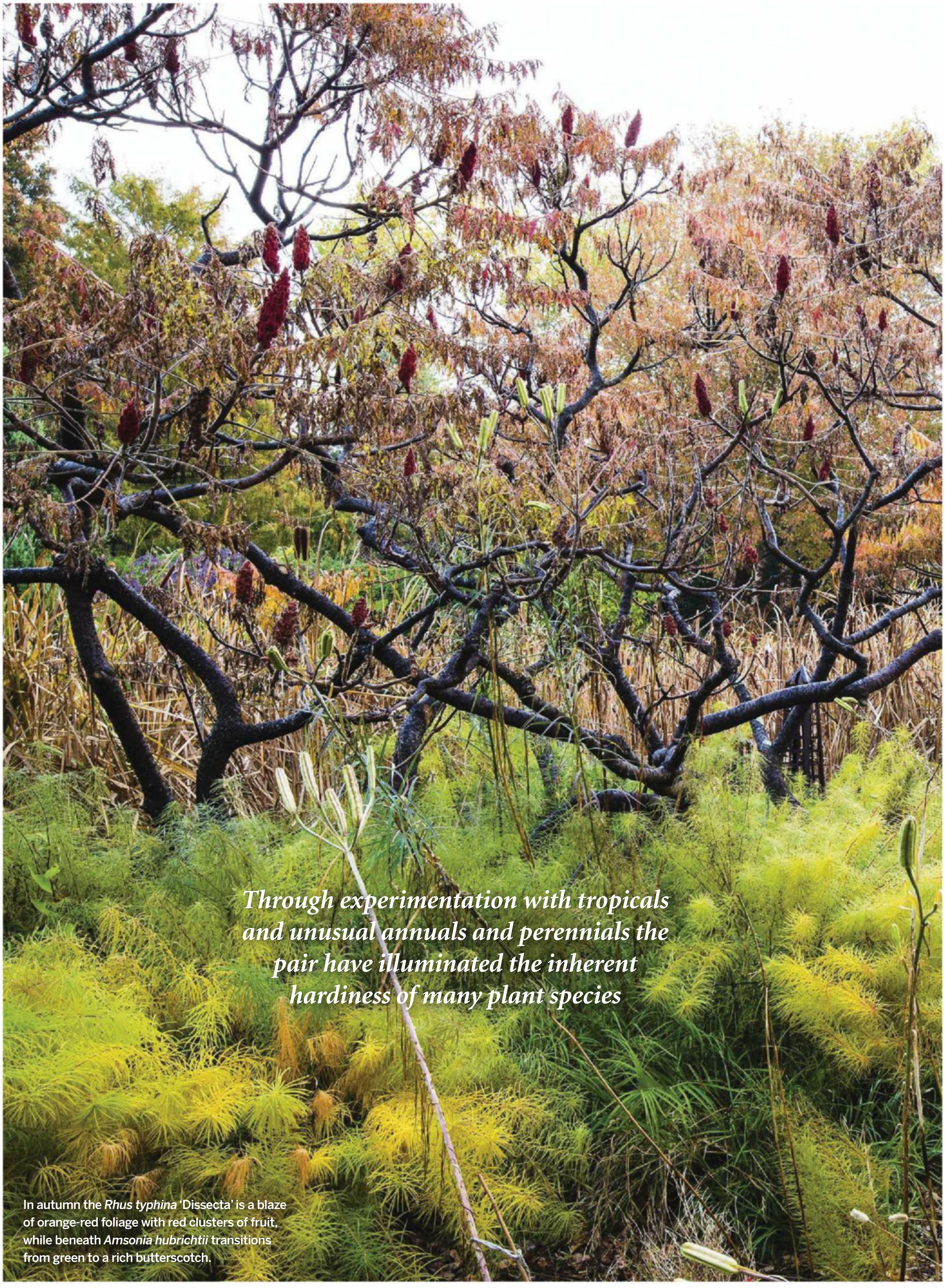
The complex and elaborately planted garden of Dennis Schrader and Bill Smith fits within the parameters of the latter. Found within 17 acres of the fertile northeastern shore of New York's Long Island. It is a precise and painterly garden, where a romantic wash of Monet collides with an exotic Gauguin.

From the entrance to the three-acre garden, with its knot garden and terraces that present hundreds of containers, which can be replanted up to five times a year, the garden becomes more relaxed in style the further you venture from the house, until it blends seamlessly into the surrounding agricultural land. "My design intent changes with each specific area of the garden," says Dennis. "Overall I like to have more manicured and heavily designed areas close to the house. Moving away from the house the garden is more relaxed and less specialised."

Relatively close to the terraces, but mostly hidden by jungly mixed borders focusing on bold foliage evocative of the tropics – bananas, cannas, palms, colocasias, tetrapanax – is the garden's social hub: the Tiki Hut. Many of the plants that surround this pavilion – indeed tender species throughout the garden – are relocated to heated quarters during the winter months when temperatures can plummet to -18ºC or below.

It is through this process of experimentation with tropicals and unusual annuals and perennials that the pair have illuminated the inherent hardiness of many plant species believed inappropriate for the region, especially if micro-sited. *Eucomis* species, for example, thrive in raised beds adjacent to the house, where they are given extra sharp drainage. The duo

To continue turn to page 40



Through experimentation with tropicals and unusual annuals and perennials the pair have illuminated the inherent hardiness of many plant species

In autumn the *Rhus typhina* 'Dissecta' is a blaze of orange-red foliage with red clusters of fruit, while beneath *Amsonia hubrichtii* transitions from green to a rich butterscotch.

A pavilion known as the Tiki Hut, is nestled among trees, shrubs and perennials, including *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora', and seedheads of *Lilium formosanum*.

Clockwise from top left

A bench beneath a pair of *Betula nigra*, looks out on to soft autumn planting, including the plumes of *Pennisetum villosum* and bold, red flowers of *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'.

Surrounded by drifts of grasses, including *Sporobolus heterolepis* and *Stipa tenuissima*, is Dennis and Bill's latest installation – a sunken stone folly, with a roof tapestry of assorted sedum.

The winding path to an Adirondack chair is lined by a rich mix of textures and colours from the light and airy *Pennisetum villosum* to the darker *Juniperus communis* and the erect lines of *Juncus effusus*.

The diaphanous flowers of *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Skyracer' rise above its foliage and the surrounding Echinacea seedheads.

▷ remind us that paying no attention to conventional wisdom is no enemy to a creative garden.

From the Tiki Hut, you are led through a pensively planted double border of sublime colours and textures with a reliance on grasses, in particular *Stipa tenuissima* and *Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra', to a series of areas hedged by clipped hornbeam that hold the spaces together throughout the seasons. Each is reconfigured on a yearly basis, and each ringing significantly different from the next.

Pools with interconnecting rills are the connective thread between two of the areas that are negative images of each other: in one burgundy *Cotinus coggygria* 'Royal Cloak' and *Catalpa* x *erubescens* 'Purpurea' in the other golden *Cotinus coggygria* Golden Spirit (= 'Ancot') and *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea', both accentuated with grasses, perennials and annuals that join the play of colour co-ordination.

Beyond the more rigidly designed gardens is a 12-acre managed meadow where the couple have erected a nesting platform that was readily accepted by a pair of ospreys. Now, on a yearly basis, they can witness the nest building and rearing of young, adding yet another layer of entertainment to a garden that already possesses a certain surfeit.

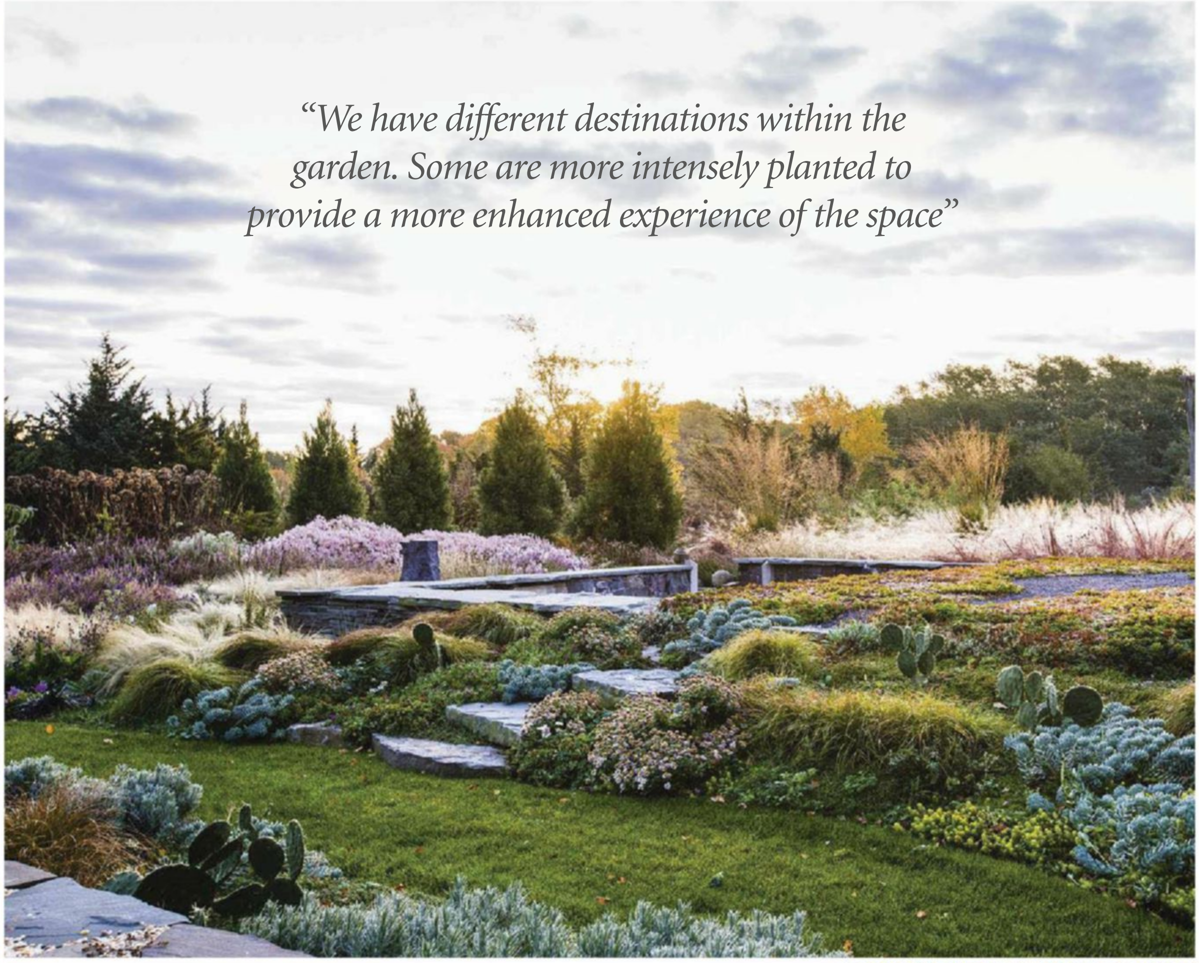
"We have different destinations within the garden and some of these areas are more intensely planted to provide a deeper, more enhanced experience of the space. The intent in these areas is to have a natural, relaxed, more fluid look," says Dennis.

This deliberate transition from formal to wild may had been interrupted by their latest installation, a stone folly sunk into the ground like the foundations of ancient ruin. It's surrounded by a slight rise possessing a congregate of grasses, hardy opuntias and self-seeding verbascums. There are only a handful of contemporary gardens in North America where craft and passion have collided with such force and precision as here, and I leave with inspiration heavily marbled in envy. □

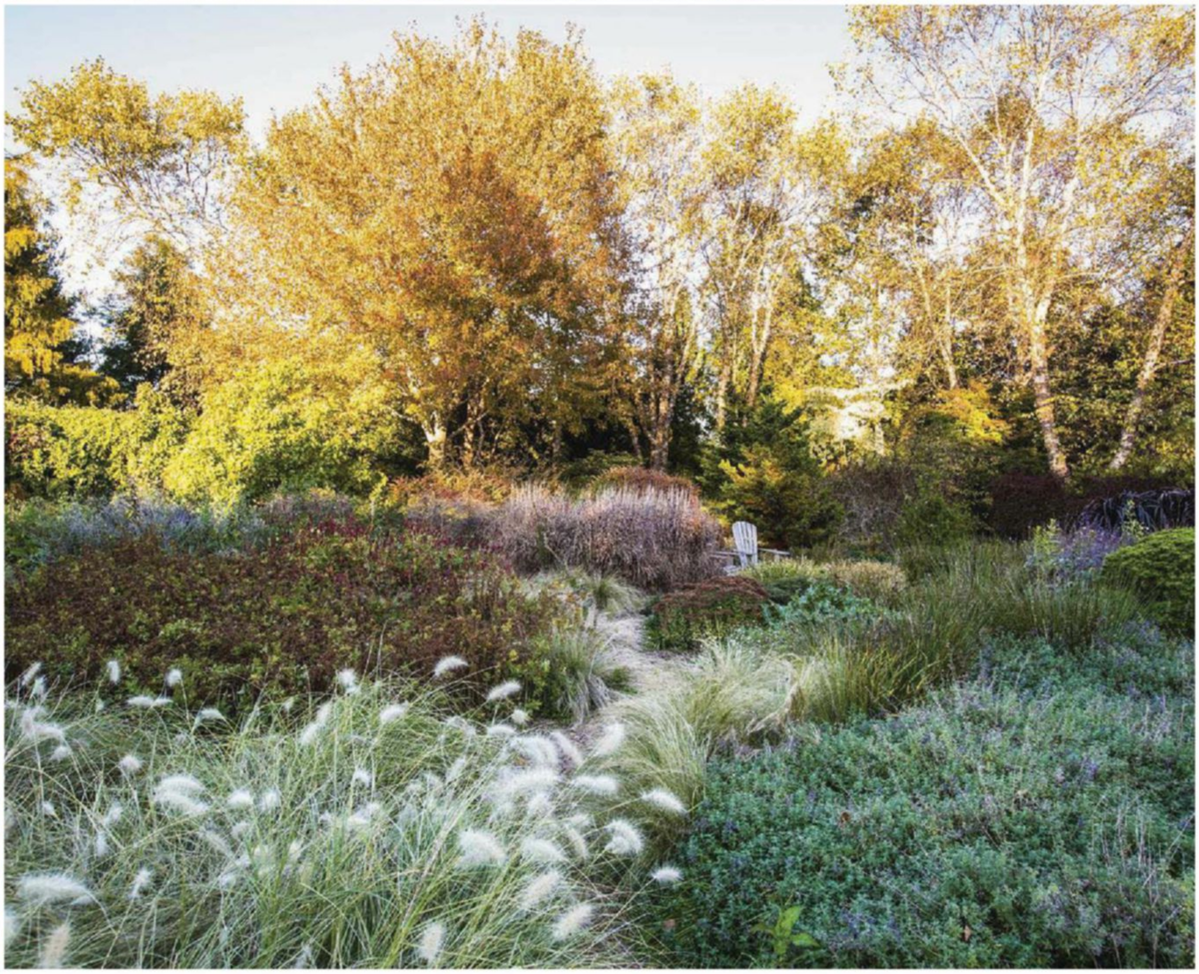
USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Dennis and Bill's wholesale nursery, Landcraft Environments, which specialises in tropicals, tender perennials and unusual annuals, at **landcraftenvironment.com**

Turn the page for 24 plant recommendations



“We have different destinations within the garden. Some are more intensely planted to provide a more enhanced experience of the space”



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# of Dennis and Bill’s key plants

1 *Agastache* ‘Apricot Sunrise’ Drought-tolerant, short-lived perennial that needs full sun and well-drained soils. 1m. USDA 6a-9b†.

2 *Digitalis* x *valinii* ‘Berry Canary’ Provides a long display of zesty blossoms on tall stems. Treated here as an annual. 1.2m. USDA 9a-10b.

3 *Jasminum officinale* Fiona Sunrise (= ‘Frojas’) Offers fragrant, white flowers, although it is possibly most useful in lending its chartreuse foliage to the scene. 6m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 7a-11.

4 *Viburnum dilatatum* ‘Michael Dodge’ Golden berries follow white summer flowers, adding depth to the autumn garden and food for birds when fully ripened. 3m. USDA 5a-8b.

5 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* ‘Firetail’ Non-stop performance from June to October makes this *Persicaria* indispensable. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

6 *Pennisetum villosum* A deciduous grass with soft plumes of white awns from late summer to autumn. Likes full sun in well-drained soils. 60cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.

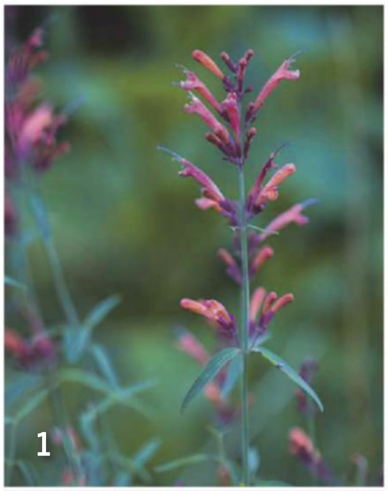
7 *Phygelius* x *rectus* ‘Moonraker’ The stoloniferous growth of this South African shrub adds an air of serendipity with erect stems clad with soft-yellow, tubular flowers throughout summer and autumn. 1.2m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-11.

8 *Nicotiana langsdorffii* Self-seeds liberally but easily edited, adding a late-summer and autumn dash of greenish yellow flowers. Needs full sun. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-10b.

9 *Salvia splendens* ‘Van-Houttei’ variegated A tender annual that adds vibrancy with both its variegated foliage and scarlet flowers. Most intense in full sun. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.

10 *Agastache* ‘Summer Glow’ Months of colour and fragrant foliage. Grown at Landcraft as an annual or short-lived perennial. 70cm. RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b.

11 *Chrysanthemum* ‘Sheffield’ A classic garden chrysanthemum that is long lasting and looks sensational in late summer and early autumn. 90cm. USDA 6a-9b.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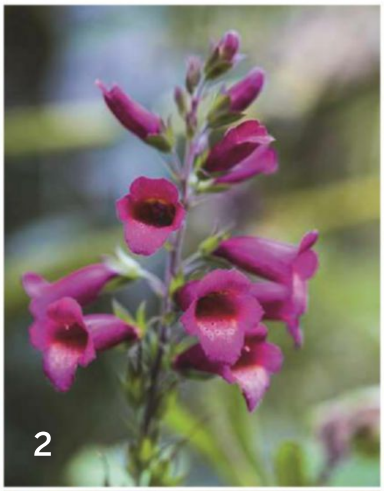
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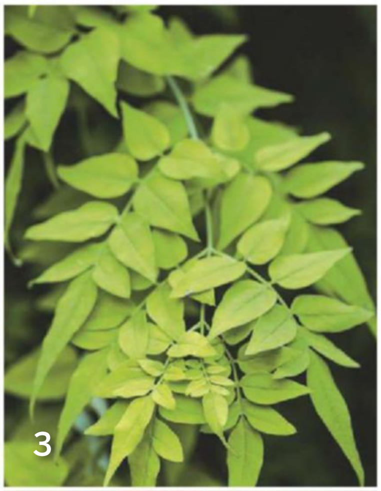
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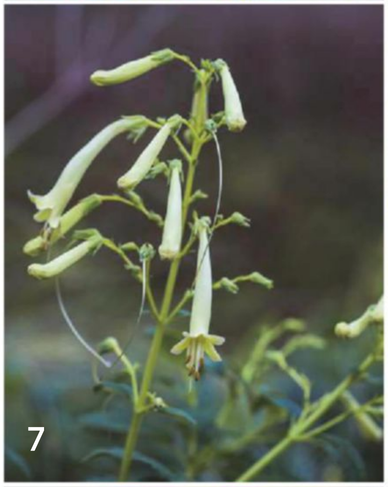
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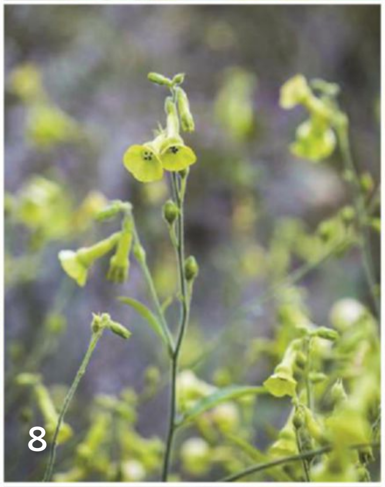
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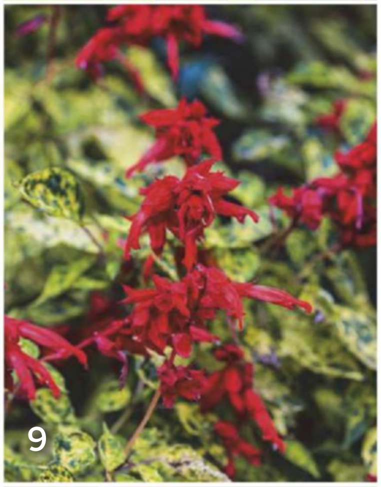
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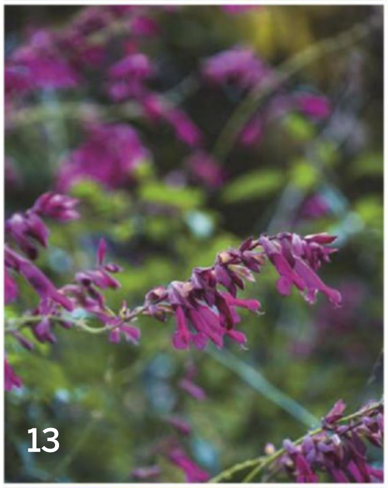
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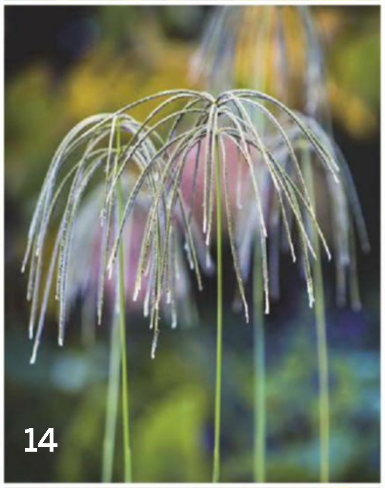
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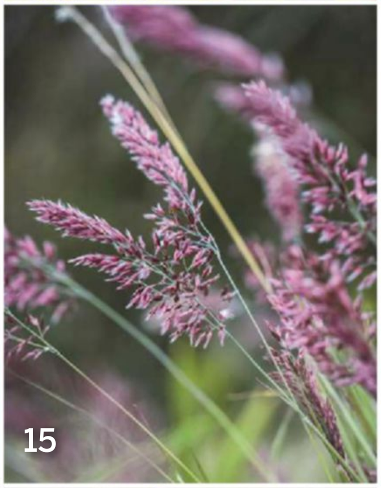
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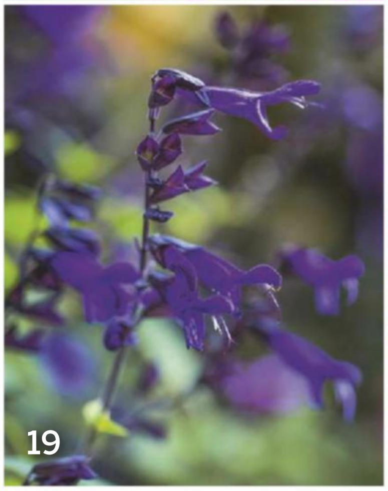
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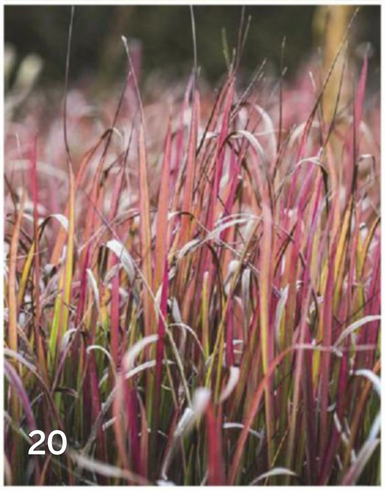
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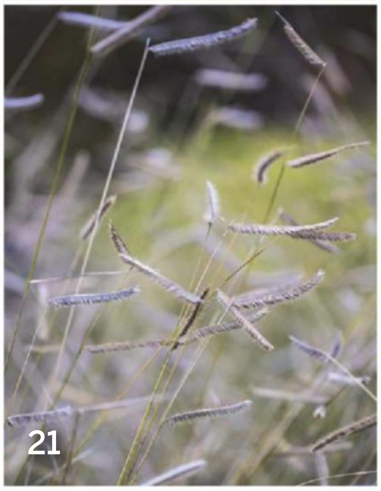
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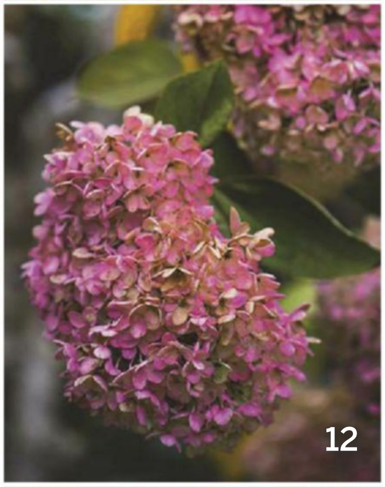
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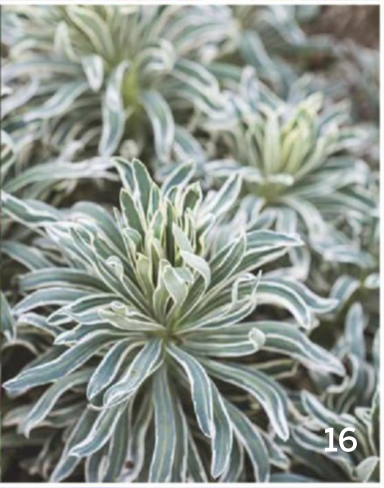
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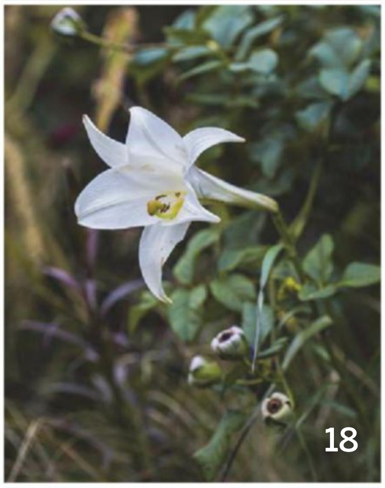
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12 *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora'
A classic selection even though there are many newer cultivars. Full sun or light shade. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

13 *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish'
Liberally self-seeds, with an astoundingly long display of purple flowers throughout summer and autumn. 1m. USDA 9b-10b.

14 *Eustachys distichophylla*
Mid-sized grass grown for its pendulous heads of seeds, Needs full sun and well-drained soil. 70cm.

15 *Melinis nerviglumis* 'Savannah Ruby'
A grass admired for its pink flowers above curled, thin, blue-green foliage. 30cm. USDA 8a-11.

16 *Euphorbia characias* 'Glacier Blue'
A superb, variegated selection with powder-blue, evergreen foliage. Needs full sun and well-drained soils. 60cm. USDA 7a-9b.

17 *Chloris virgata*
A graceful grass grown for its late and flowers and seedheads. 50cm.

18 *Lilium formosanum*
From Taiwan, will blossom in a single year from seed and will liberally self-seed throughout the garden. 2m. USDA 5a-8b.

19 *Salvia* 'Amistad'
A tough perennial with tall and sturdy stems clad with black-bracted, deep-blue flowers for months on end. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.

20 *Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra'
The Japanese blood grass, will snake by stolons through the garden but will not, fortunately, self sow. Its translucent blades are best used if backlit. 40cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

21 *Bouteloua gracilis* 'Blonde Ambition'
A blue grama, with flag-like floating seedheads of bright yellow/gold following chartreuse flowers. 90cm. USDA 4a-9b.

22 *Salvia viridis* var. *comata*
An annual clary sage that self-seeds with long-lasting, bracted flowers and foliage with a lovely smoky fragrance. 45cm.

23 *Echinacea* 'Meteor Red'
One of an array of new, double echinaceas. Indispensable Needs full sun and well-drained soils. 60cm. USDA 3a-8b.

24 *Sporobolus heterolepis*
Wonderful late-summer flowers and sensational seedheads with a scent of buttered popcorn. 1m. USDA 3a-9b.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

In autumn Mary uses the bright oranges and yellows of *Dahlia* 'Ludwig Helfert' and *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* to lift the blue of *Symphyotrichum turbinellum*.

In brief

Name The Old Rectory.
What Designer Mary Keen's own garden with strong structure and colourful planting.
Where Gloucestershire.
Size One and three quarter acres.
Soil Cotswold brash – free-draining limestone.
Climate 150m above sea level, so colder than much of southwest England, but the frost does drain away.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

Moving on

In the last of our seasonal visits to the garden of designer Mary Keen, we find Mary in reflective mood as she prepares to say goodbye to the Cotswold garden she has loved for so long

WORDS MARY KEEN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Autumn colour seems be happening later, possibly as a result of climate change. Foliage is the obvious star, but in small gardens, which have never been places to major in trees, there are compensations in those shrubs and flowers that suggest the reds, yellows and oranges of a perfect autumn display. When I started designing, orange for clients was taboo. I have always loved orange, especially when partnered with blue. Van Gogh wrote that 'there is no blue without yellow and without orange' and I try to keep this going all year in the gooseberry garden. The marigold *Calendula officinalis* 'Indian Prince' and the Great Dixter favourite *Tagetes* 'Cinnabar' are good with love-in-a-mist or *Salvia patens.* The marigolds flower endlessly if they are deadheaded, but the nigella is generally over by mid July. The seed pods are pretty, especially in the form *N. hispanica*. The orange-and-blue theme carries on with the best orange dahlia 'Ludwig Helfert', and one of my top plants, *Symphyotrichum turbinellum*. This Michaelmas daisy is a haze of tiny blue stars that appear a little later than the flowers of *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow', another autumn plant I would not want to do without. *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' flowers for longer than either of my favourites and plenty of gardeners grow this aster for its perpetual habit, but its flowers are too large and too mauve for me. And it flops. Another good aster is the dark-stemmed *S. laeve* 'Calliope'. I find the *Aster amellus* cultivars less easy to use, they have a stiff habit and tend to get mildew. *Symphyotrichum novae-angliae* 'Andenken an Alma Pötschke' is a terrific shocking pink but its legs are hideous.

Admittedly most asters need a bit of support, unless they are chopped in late May to delay their flowering. The trick with staking is to get there before the stems collapse. I used to use pea sticks for most plants, but have recently found the canes and string method, which Fergus Garrett uses at Great Dixter, much easier. You plunge one bamboo into the ground near the centre of the plant and from that anchor, take twine to encircle each stem until you have completed the ring and tied the circle into the cane where you started. This way of staking is not strong enough for dahlias. We use iron stakes and string in the Fergus way, but the tallest of all dahlias, 'Admiral Rawlings', can be hard to tame, even with an iron rod.

Most garden tasks get lighter as summer ends, but late August is the best time for trimming the topiary. In a wet summer the yew grows fast and looks woolly, so it is tempting to start sooner. Too soon and the yew grows again, but some years, it takes two cuts to keep it tidy. This year's trim was the Old Rectory's last, for me at least. We must soon leave the garden which I have loved for a quarter of a century. A sad prospect, but gardens are ephemeral and rarely last for ever. It seems the right time to hand this one over to the care of a young family who love the place as much as we do, while I can look forward to the excitement of starting the process of creating a garden all over again.

Turn the page for Mary's advice on combining colours for autumn

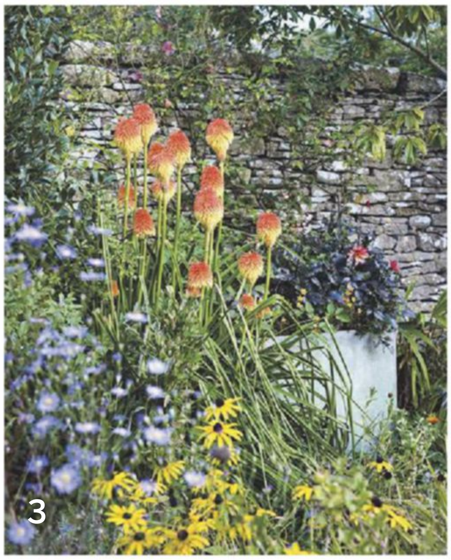
We use iron stakes and string to stake our dahlias but the tallest of all, 'Admiral Rawlings', can be hard to tame, even with an iron rod

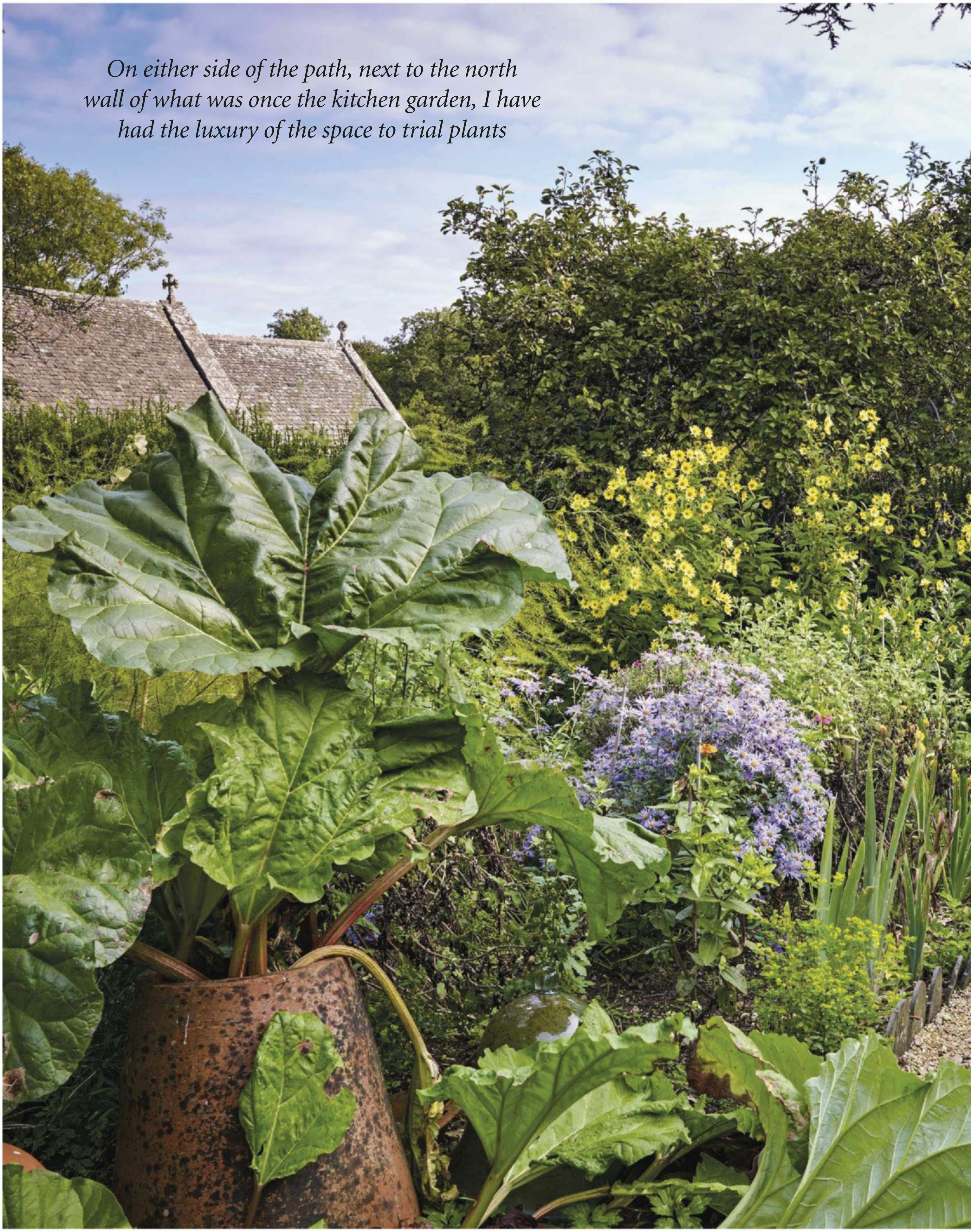
Late-season colour

The colours in the summer garden deepen towards autumn. Those dahlias, such as the tall *Dahlia* 'Admiral Rawlings' (**1**) that come in shades of darkest crimson and purple, are invaluable but the hot pinks of dahlias 'Roxy', 'Fascination' and 'Winston Churchill', as well as *Salvia involucrata* 'Bethellii' and *Salvia greggii* 'Pink Preference' stop everything looking too glum. There are blues from *Perovskia* (**2**) and *Phlox paniculata* 'Blue Paradise'. These have very different needs. *Perovskia* likes hot and dry conditions, but the phlox prefer cool and damp. If you want to buck the growing conditions, as I have done for years, you have to be prepared to spot water the plants that can't take the heat. A heavy mulch after spring rain can help to keep a plant going in spite of adverse conditions. But where phlox might make it, hydrangeas probably wouldn't. This kind of un-neighbourly gardening is less green than I would hope to be. I plan to try harder in the new plot.

Kniphofia are not acceptable to everyone. One client screamed and made us remove the offenders we planted. But there are pokers and pokers. The old cottage garden favourite *Kniphofia uvaria* may be a bit coarse, but the slender yellow 'Little Maid' is desirable and I like the delicate coral of 'Jenny Bloom' and 'Lord Roberts'. Latest and grandest of all the kniphofias is the evergreen *K. rooperi* (**3**), a last exclamation mark to signal the passing of another gardening season. All plants that provide vertical accents are an addition to any planting, and pokers flower all summer, so why not love them?

On my limey Cotswold soil the spindle berries thrive. I am happy with the ordinary *Euonymus europaeus*, but I also have the showier *Euonymus europaeus* 'Red Cascade' (**4**) ▷





On either side of the path, next to the north wall of what was once the kitchen garden, I have had the luxury of the space to trial plants

▷ and the strange *Euonymus alatus* with leaves that flame in the autumn. In the new, much smaller garden, where there is only room for one bush, I may go for 'Red Cascade' as its berries are spectacular for picking. The spindles are passengers all summer, so they are not for prominent places, or gardens where space is short.

On either side of the path, next to the north wall of what was once the kitchen garden, I have had the luxury of the space to trial plants. A generous gift of irises from Dan Pearson were planted there until they flowered. Seedling hellebores were lifted to grow on and then selected for rounded petals or desirable colours. In the new garden space will be far more limited, so when we move we are planning to take on an allotment, as well as the new garden. I will probably use some of that extra space as a test ground or for bulking up plants. When you move house, gardening friends are always generous, so having a reserve plot for fillers is a great asset.

I have enjoyed creating an experimental grass border (**5**) at the Old Rectory, but it was much harder work than I thought it would be. The *Sporobolus heterolepis* was lovely in November, but less lovely by the time it had seeded everywhere in the spring.

Our new garden will have a small reminder of the rectory's apple orchard (**6**) as our new place is surrounded by damson and apple trees. The house is earlier than the Old Rectory, so it does not seem to be a garden that will suit prairie or exotic planting. The grass there is perfection for the kind of meadow that I never managed to achieve here, so I will major in a meadow. With apple trees to the north end of it, it will never be as shaded as the current orchard meadow so if time permits I will plant out my favourite species *Crocus tommasinianus* and blue *Anemone blanda* so they will flower next spring. The pretty *Rudbeckia triloba* (**7**) is another plant I will definitely want to repeat in the new garden.

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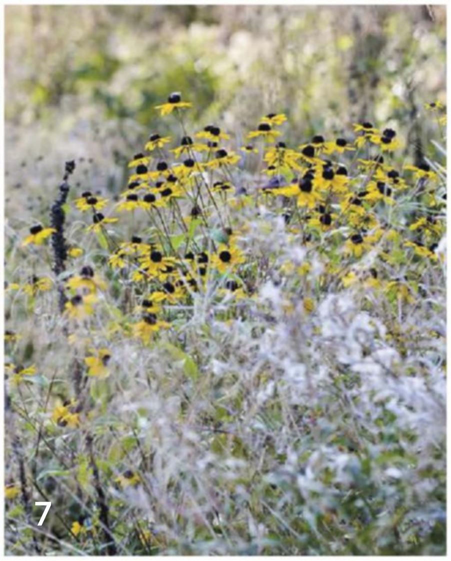

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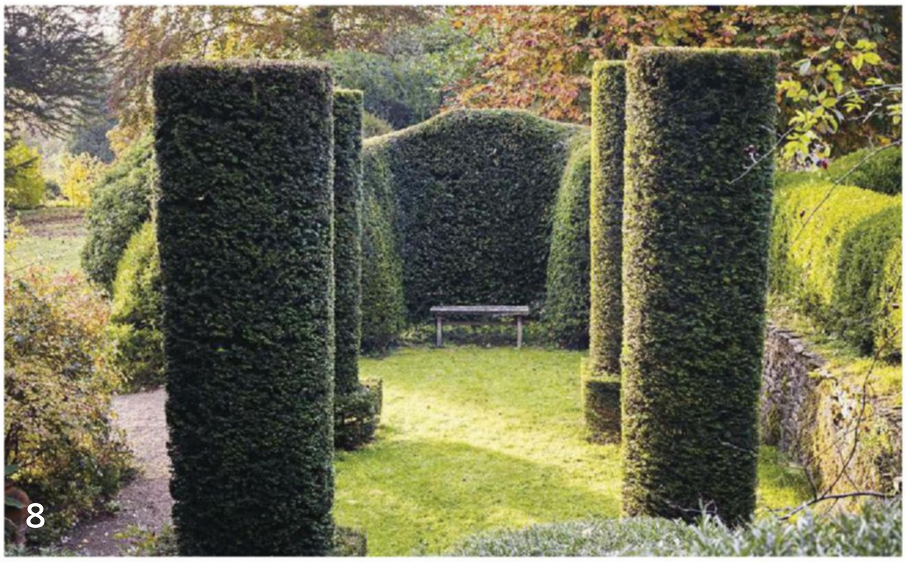
The same light will fall on our new place further west, at the far end of the Cotswold hills. I will grow more dahlias all summer until the frosts start to bite

New from old

Autumn light is low and golden. Everything looks beautiful in September and October. I will miss the yellow lime leaves and the tall topiary pillars (**8**), which we first saw at this time of year. But the same light will fall on our new place further west, at the far end of the Cotswold hills. I will grow more dahlias all summer until the frosts start to bite and plant my favourite *Rosa* x *odorata* 'Mutabilis' and plenty of phlox in the shade. I may even find a spot for the flaming *Euonymus alatus* (**9**) and possibly even create another huge hen, from box, or yew at the top of the garden to hide the useful corner that will hold a new hot compost bin and the log pile. I have always loved the *Polystichum setiferum* (**10**) growing beneath the limes and have already chosen a shady corner of the courtyard outside the new house's kitchen where a piece of the best, 'Pulcherrimum Bevis', will be happy, and another corner to plant the October-flowering snowdrop *Galanthus reginae-olgae*. A greenhouse is already ordered for the geraniums now sitting on a sunny windowsill, as well as for the half-hardies, begonias and sowing seed.

"Oh you will miss all this," visitors to the Old Rectory have been saying all summer. Unhelpfully. And they're right I will. At first at least. But making a new garden is exciting and although I'm sure some of the old enemies, such as ivy and bindweed, are lying in wait, I know the new soil is marvellous. When that famous pair of Sissinghurst head gardeners, Pamela Schwerdt and Sibylle Kreutzberger, retired to a small Cotswold garden, they waited a year before planting anything for fear of noxious weeds. Received wisdom also advises waiting in a new place to see what comes up. I may not be so patient. I will, of course, miss this garden, but gardening at the new house will be much easier and fun, I hope, in a totally different way.



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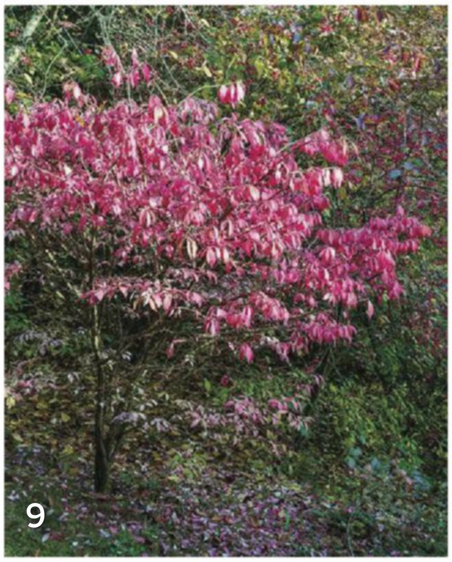

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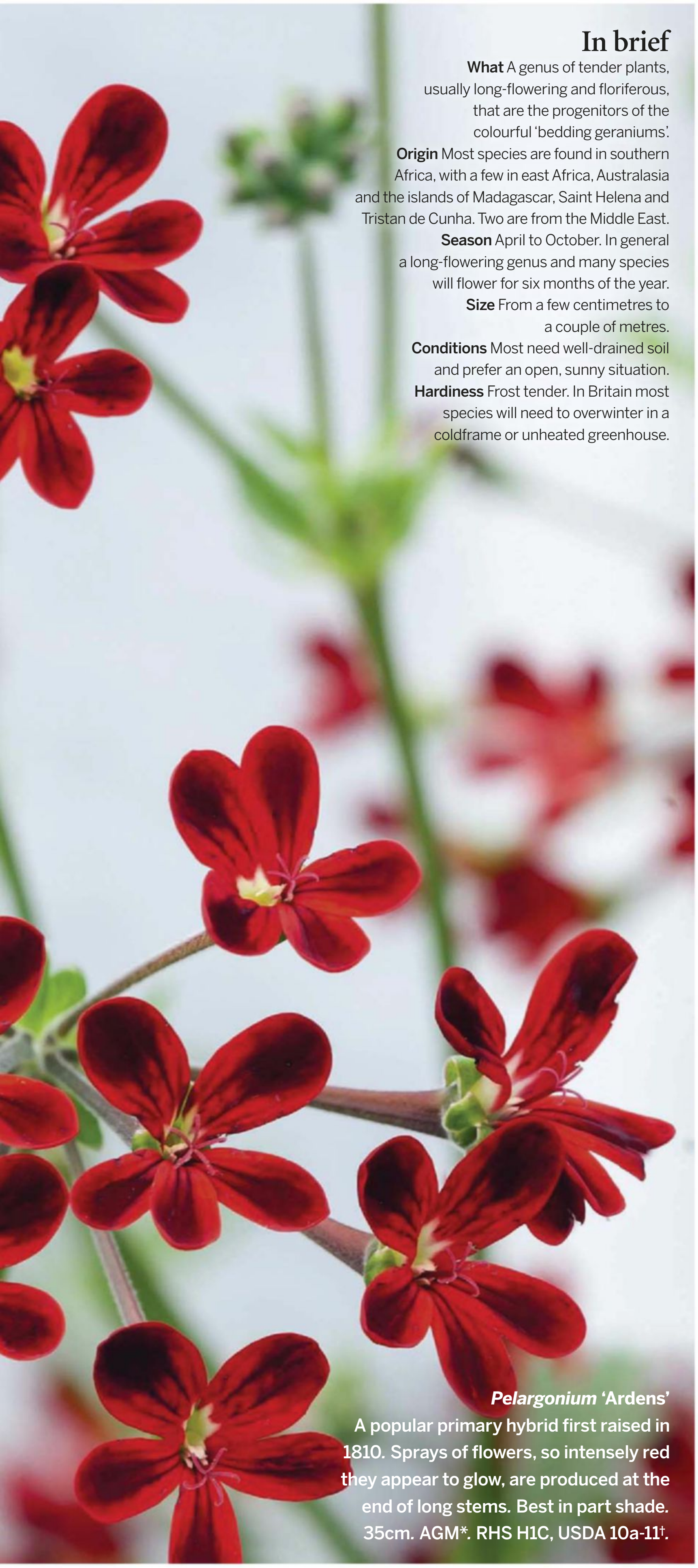
10

Species pelargoniums

Species plants and primary hybrids have a delicacy that is far removed from the blowsy blooms normally associated with the *Pelargonium* genus

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PHOTOGRAPHS DIANNA JAZWINSKI



In brief

What A genus of tender plants, usually long-flowering and floriferous, that are the progenitors of the colourful 'bedding geraniums'.

Origin Most species are found in southern Africa, with a few in east Africa, Australasia and the islands of Madagascar, Saint Helena and Tristan de Cunha. Two are from the Middle East.

Season April to October. In general a long-flowering genus and many species will flower for six months of the year.

Size From a few centimetres to a couple of metres.

Conditions Most need well-drained soil and prefer an open, sunny situation.

Hardiness Frost tender. In Britain most species will need to overwinter in a coldframe or unheated greenhouse.

***Pelargonium* 'Ardens'**
A popular primary hybrid first raised in 1810. Sprays of flowers, so intensely red they appear to glow, are produced at the end of long stems. Best in part shade. 35cm. AGM*. RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11†.

John Hoyland is a plantsman and garden writer who has gardens in both southeast England and southwest France.

Gardeners are always on the lookout for something new. Every year 'improved' forms of old favourites or strange hybrids in unexpected colours are introduced. In the rush for novelty, species plants, the wild ancestors of garden hybrids, are often overlooked. When I was taking my first, tentative, steps down the gardening path in the 1970s, I remember a nurseryman asking why I would be in interested in species plants, which were all 'dull and weedy', when I could have colourful modern hybrids. Had I been more articulate (and know what I now know) I would have replied that species plants have a robustness often lacking in their descendants and that their simple flowers have an elegance lost in breeding hybrids. In the past couple of decades garden designers have also realised that species plants combine well with other plants to create a more natural look in the garden.

The difference between a species plant and a hybrid can be so huge that the two look unrelated. This gap is probably greatest between the gaudy flowers of hybrid pelargoniums (the popular 'bedding geraniums') and the subtle allure of the wild forms of the genus. There will always be a place for blowsy plants in my garden, but the discreet charm of species plants is much more welcome.

There are about 17,000 pelargonium cultivars, all derived from just a few of the 280 species. The genus is diverse and includes annuals, perennials, succulents, shrubs and tubers that range in height from a few centimetres to several metres. The flowers are irregularly shaped, with two upper petals and three lower ones. The genus encompasses an enormous variety of leaf shape and textures.

One of the traits that attracted breeders is that many of the species are both floriferous and long-flowering. The first I grew, *P. ionidiflorum*, is covered with sprays of flowers from early spring and only stops flowering when I cut the plant back for ▷

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ overwintering. This ability to produce flowers over a long period can be seen in modern hybrids.

Many species pelargoniums are grown for their scented leaves rather than for their flowers. The most common are rose-scented species, such as *P. capitatum*, and citrus-scented ones, such as *P. citronellum*, which have formed part of complex breeding programmes to produce scented-leaved pelargoniums. Peppermint, balsam and spice perfumes are also found in species pelargoniums. The scent from the wild plants is far stronger than that of the cultivars and hybrids, and I remember a warm evening in the Western Cape when just a few plants of *P. citronellum* filled the air with the sharp smell of lemon.

More than 80 per cent of pelargoniums are native to the south western tip of South Africa although *P. triste*, the first to arrive in Britain in the early 17th century, was known as Indian storksbill in the belief it came from India. The powerful night-time scent of its tiny flowers – reminiscent of jasmine – caused a sensation.

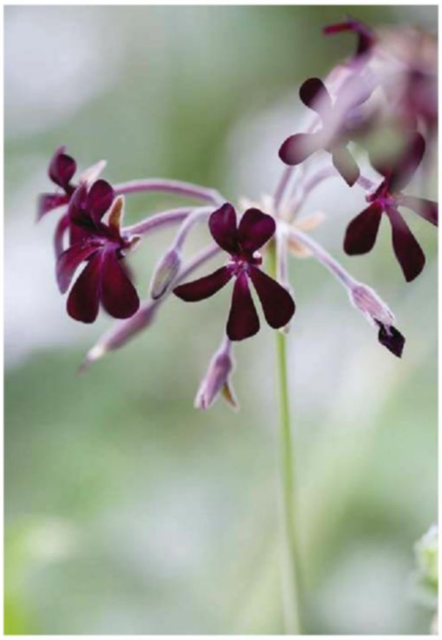
Perfumed flowers is a trait of some species pelargoniums that has been lost in breeding hybrids. Sometimes the scent is soft and faint, as in the fringed flowers of *P. caffrum*, and sometimes so heady that it is almost overpowering, and not always pleasant *P. gibbosum*, an unusual-looking plant with succulent stems and leaves, has flowers with a particularly strong perfume that a friend has likened to toilet cleaner.

In the wild very little hybridisation occurs, even when species are growing close to each other, but as early as the start of the 19th century, plant collectors began crossing different species. The results known as primary (or species) hybrids tend to closely resemble their parents, but the same cross can produce different plants. Both the fiery-red *P.* 'Ardens' (see page 53) and the larger purple-red *P.* 'Schottii' (page 58) are from the same parents. Both were once seen only in the collections of enthusiasts but are now, thanks in part to micropropagation, widespread and popular.

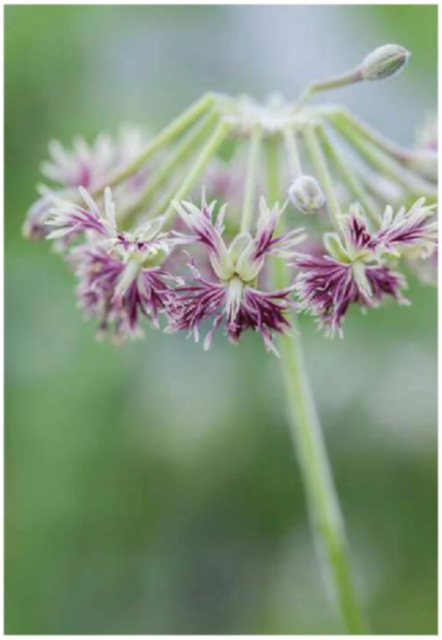
These species and primary hybrid pelargoniums don't have the razzamatazz of their highly interbred descendants but they provide a diversity of colour, texture and scent that is perpetually captivating.

- John's recommendations for species pelargoniums continue over the next six pages.

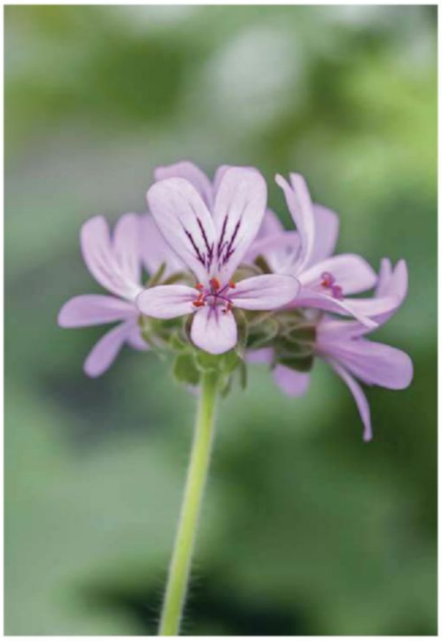
Species pelargoniums



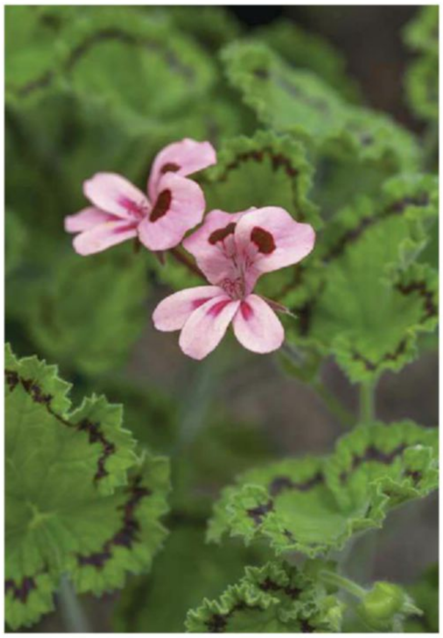
Pelargonium sidoides
Sprays of dark-purple, almost black, flowers contrast with the silvery grey, heart-shaped leaves. Used in traditional medicine in South Africa and still found in some cold remedies. 25cm. AGM. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



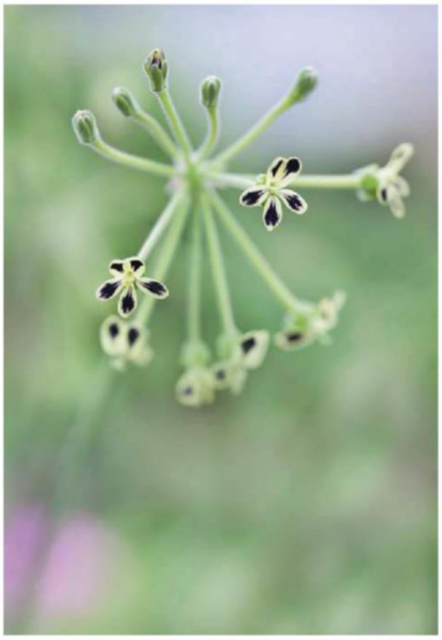
P. caffrum
The fringed petals give the flower a slightly zany look. Leaves are so narrow that they seem skeletal. It was very popular when introduced in the 1860s but is now seldom grown. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



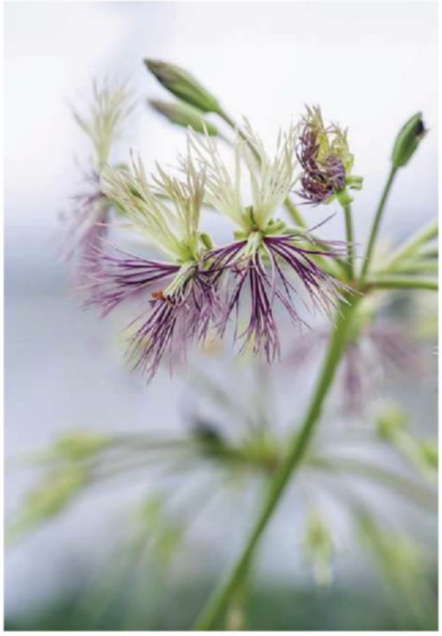
P. capitatum
Soft, downy foliage that is strongly rose-scented, and tight clusters of mauve flowers. One of the first pelargoniums introduced into Europe. Now grown commercially for its scented oils. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



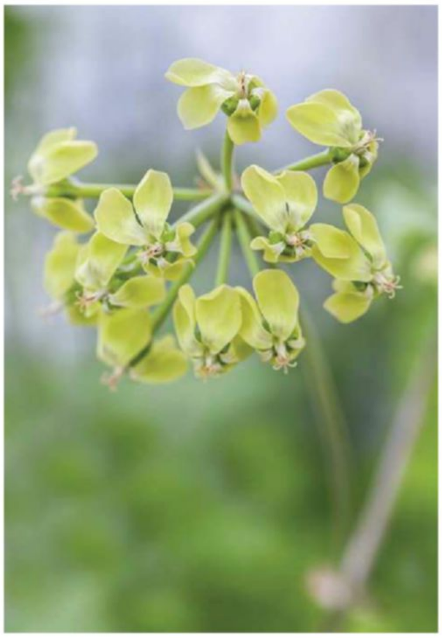
P. alpinum
The form most commonly found in cultivation has a chocolate-coloured line that follows the shape of the leaf. It can become straggly with age so should be cut back regularly. 30cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



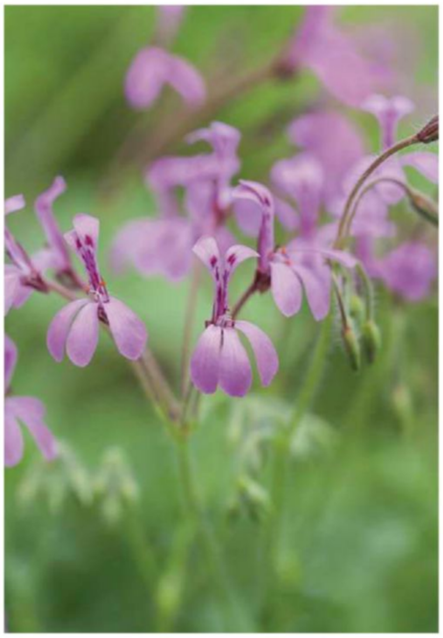
P. lobatum
Large, velvety leaves appear from a peculiar-looking, woody tuber followed by umbels of cream-and-brown flowers that are sweetly scented at night. Parent of some attractive hybrids. 20cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



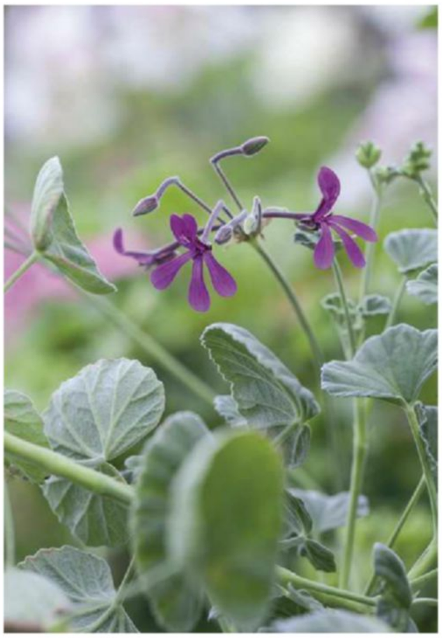
P. schizopetalum
A large, gnarled tuber – more mineral than vegetable – with short stems of wispy flowers, scented at night. Lower petals are usually flushed purple and upper ones a yellowish-green. 20cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



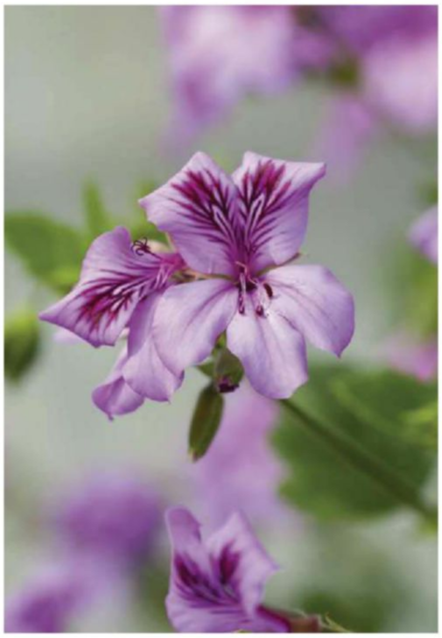
P. gibbosum
A sprawling plant – stems up to a metre long – with unusual swellings at the leaf joints and succulent-like, blue-grey foliage. Flowers are a yellowish-green colour and strongly scented at night. 50cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



P. ionidiflorum
A neat and compact dome of small, serrated leaves (2cm long) that is smothered with sprays of pink flowers. Long-flowering – mine starts in May and carries on until the end of September. 35cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.

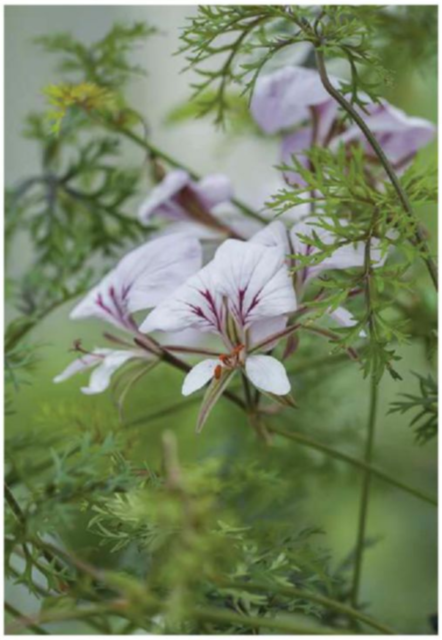


P. reniforme
Kidney-shaped, greyish-green leaves with a velvety texture and flowers that are usually a startling shade of pink. The plant's size and habit is very similar to *P. sidoides*.
25cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.

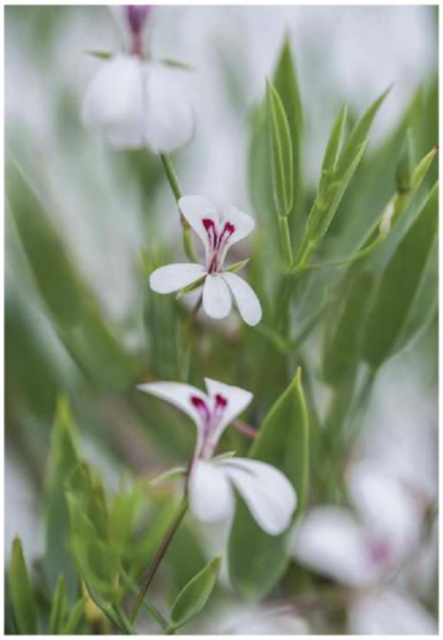


P. betulinum
An upright plant with woody stems that has fresh-green, rounded foliage and large pink flowers. The flowers resemble those of modern regal hybrids and it may be an ancestor. 30cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.

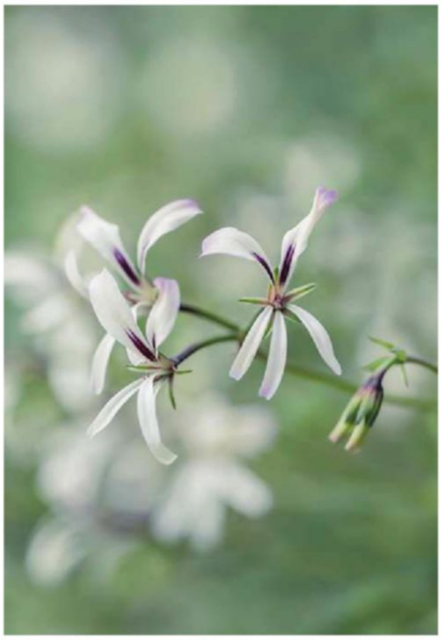
Species pelargoniums



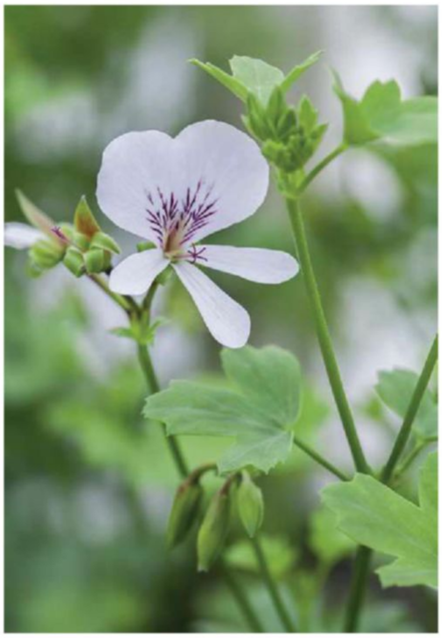
P. myrrhifolium
A prostrate, rather straggly, plant with finely cut, lacy foliage and pale-pink flowers with red veining on upper petals. The larger flowered form var. *coriandrifolium*, is more widely available. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



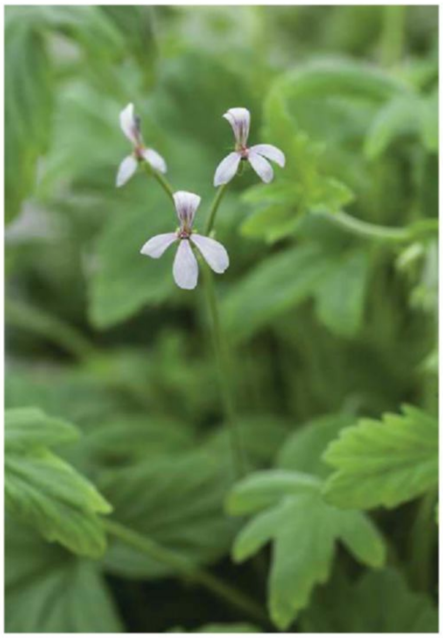
P. lanceolatum
The fleshy, glaucous leaves are, as the name suggests, lance-shaped and held upright. Flowers are white with a red mark on the upper petals. Not as floriferous as other species. 45cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



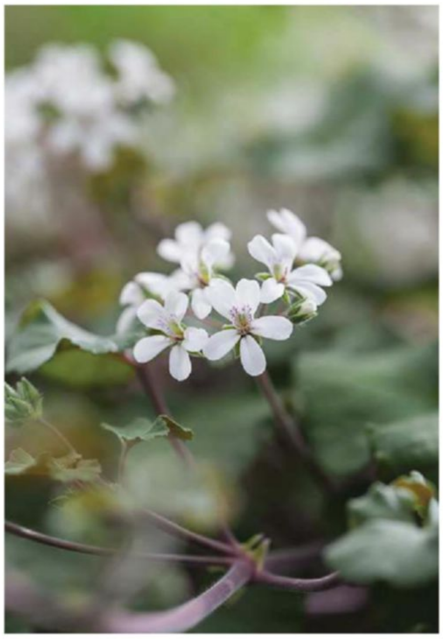
P. trifidum
A sprawling plant with spicy aromatic foliage whose stems can reach a metre long. The creamy-white flowers have narrow petals with maroon blotches on the upper pair and are up to 3cm wide. 15cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



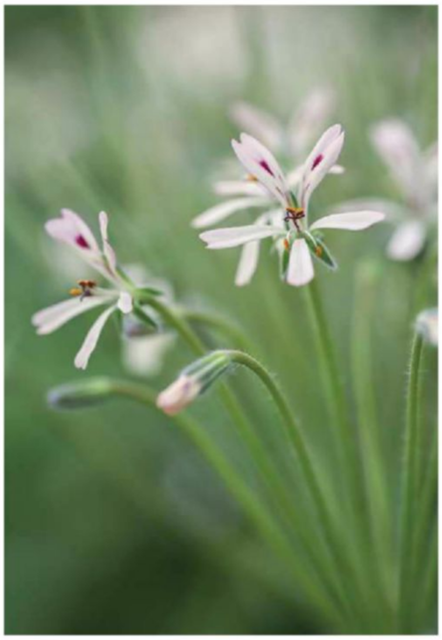
P. grandiflorum
An upright plant whose stems become woody with age. Leaves are smooth and glaucous and flowers are usually pale pink with red veining on the upper set. An ancestor of the regal type. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



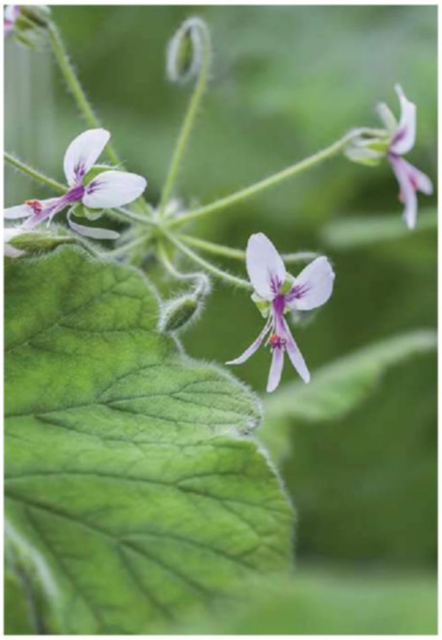
P. quinquelobatum
An easy-to-grow annual with apple-green foliage and biscuit-coloured flowers, which, as the temperature and light-levels change, develop an iridescent sheen on the petals. My favourite. 20cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



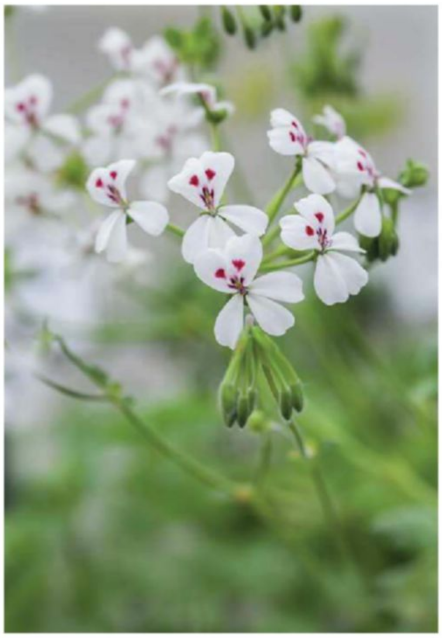
P. australe
A compact, low-growing species with dark-green, slightly hairy, leaves that have a reddish reverse and stems. The white flowers are often flecked with pink. Native to Australasia. 30cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



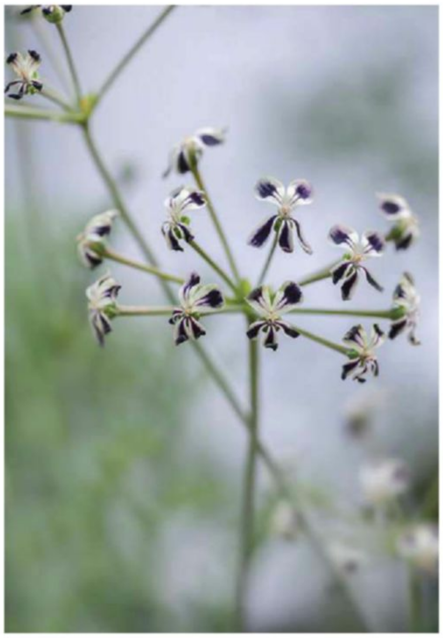
P. articulatum
An improbable-looking plant with heart-shaped leaves at the end of 20cm-long stalks. It has been used in breeding programmes to produce the more upright zonal pelargoniums. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



P. tomentosum
A species grown more for its spectacular foliage than for its sprays of tiny leaves. The leaves are large, smell of peppermint and have the texture of velvet, making them irresistible to touch. 50cm. AGM. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



***P. echinatum* 'Album'**
Known in the 19th century as the 'sweetheart pelargonium' for the heart-shaped, red markings on its upper petals. In the wild the species occasionally has pink or magenta flowers. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



P. triste
An unpromising mound of feathery foliage followed by tall stems of tiny, cream flowers with purple blotches on the petals. Its real joy is the honey-and-clove perfume it produces at night. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.

Cultivation

- All pelargoniums need to be kept in a cool greenhouse over winter. The two species found in the Middle East, *P. endlicherianum* and *P. quercetorum*, are reputedly hardy and I know of gardeners in sheltered areas who leave *P. sidoides* outside year round, but if you want to be sure that your pelargoniums will survive the winter they need to be in a greenhouse, conservatory or coldframe. I grow mine in a loam-based compost that is about one third each of loam, composted bark and horticultural grit. Whatever compost you use it must be well drained: waterlogging is the quickest way to kill off a pelargonium. I use clay pots not only because they are more attractive but also because any excess moisture can evaporate through the clay. Like all plants growing in pots, pelargoniums will need to be fed. Species plants need far less fertiliser than hybrids and I give mine a liquid tomato feed once a month between May and September.

- Most pelargoniums thrive in dry, sunny situations but *P. tomentosum* grows best in dappled shade. Wherever they are grown, pelargoniums benefit from good air circulation, so don't overcrowd them.

- Unless you want to collect seed, cutting back the dead flowers will, in most species, prolong flowering. On plants such as *P. sidoides*, *P. reniforme*, *P. echinatum* and other species with a long flower stem, cut the whole stem off down to the base. With densely floriferous plants, such as *P. ionidiflorum*, *P. australe* and *P. trifidum*, I find it more effective to shear off all the flower stems once the majority have flowered.

- At the end of the growing season, before the plants are put into the greenhouse, I cut out any damaged stems and then cut back the whole plant by about two thirds. This can seem drastic but it will ensure that the plant is easier to store and that the increased air flow around it will minimise disease.

Pelargonium vs. *Geranium*

The disagreement about the naming of pelargoniums is an old one and even in the late 19th century gardening publications were complaining about gardeners who confused the two. Botanically, the genus *Pelargonium* includes all species plants and the modern hybrids that are commonly known as geraniums. The 18th-century botanist Carl Linnaeus grouped pelargoniums, erodiums and geraniums together and it was not until the beginning of the 19th century that botanists, with a few dissenters, agreed that they were different genera. It is peculiar that two centuries later no one would call an erodium a geranium but we are still referring to pelargoniums as geraniums. At the time of the change erodiums, geraniums and pelargoniums were popularly known as heronsbills, cranesbills and storksbills, respectively, after the resemblance of their seedpods to the beaks of birds. The word pelargonium is derived from the Greek word *pelargos*, meaning a stork.

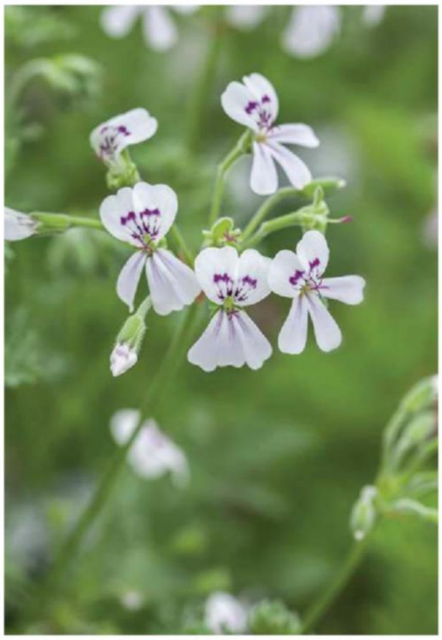
Where to buy

- **Fibrex Nurseries**
  Honeybourne Road,
  Pebworth, Stratford-upon-Avon,
  Warwickshire CV37 8XP.
  Tel 01789 720788, fibrex.co.uk
- **Pelargonium Species World**
  Online only seed supplier.
  pelargoniumspeciesworld.com
- **Woottens of Wenhaston**
  The Iris Field, Hall Road,
  Wenhaston, Suffolk IP19 9HF.
  Tel 01502 478258,
  woottensplants.com

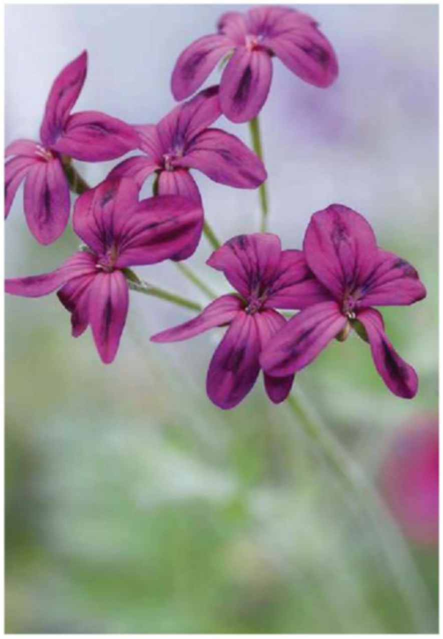
Reader offer

Gardens Illustrated readers can purchase five exclusive collections of species and scented pelargoniums at a special price from pelargonium specialist Woottens of Wenhaston. See page 104 for details.

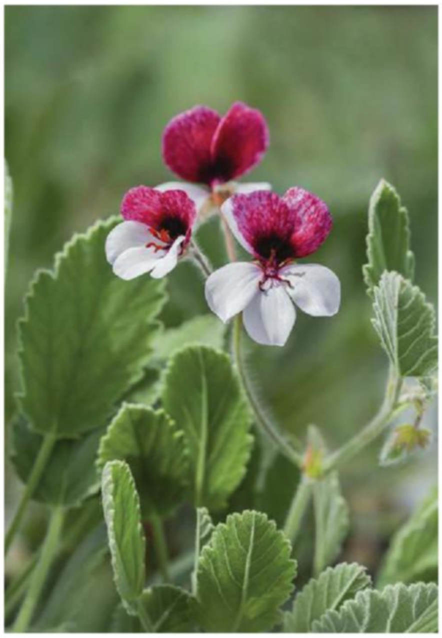
Primary hybrids



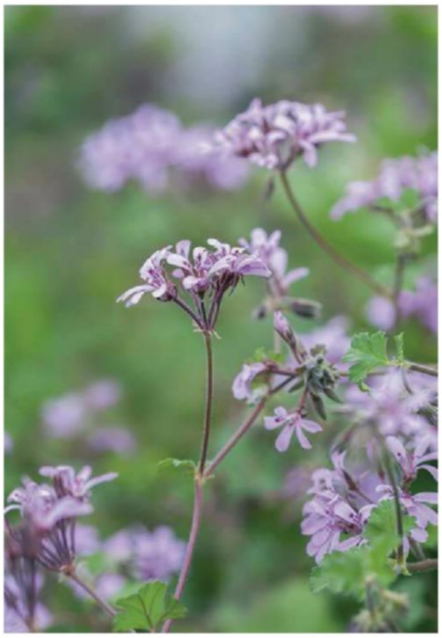
***P.* ’Blandfordianum’**
Deeply cut leaves have a pungent, wormwood scent and masses of flowers with a deep-pink smudge on the upper petals. Originally raised by the Marquis of Blandford in 1805.
40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



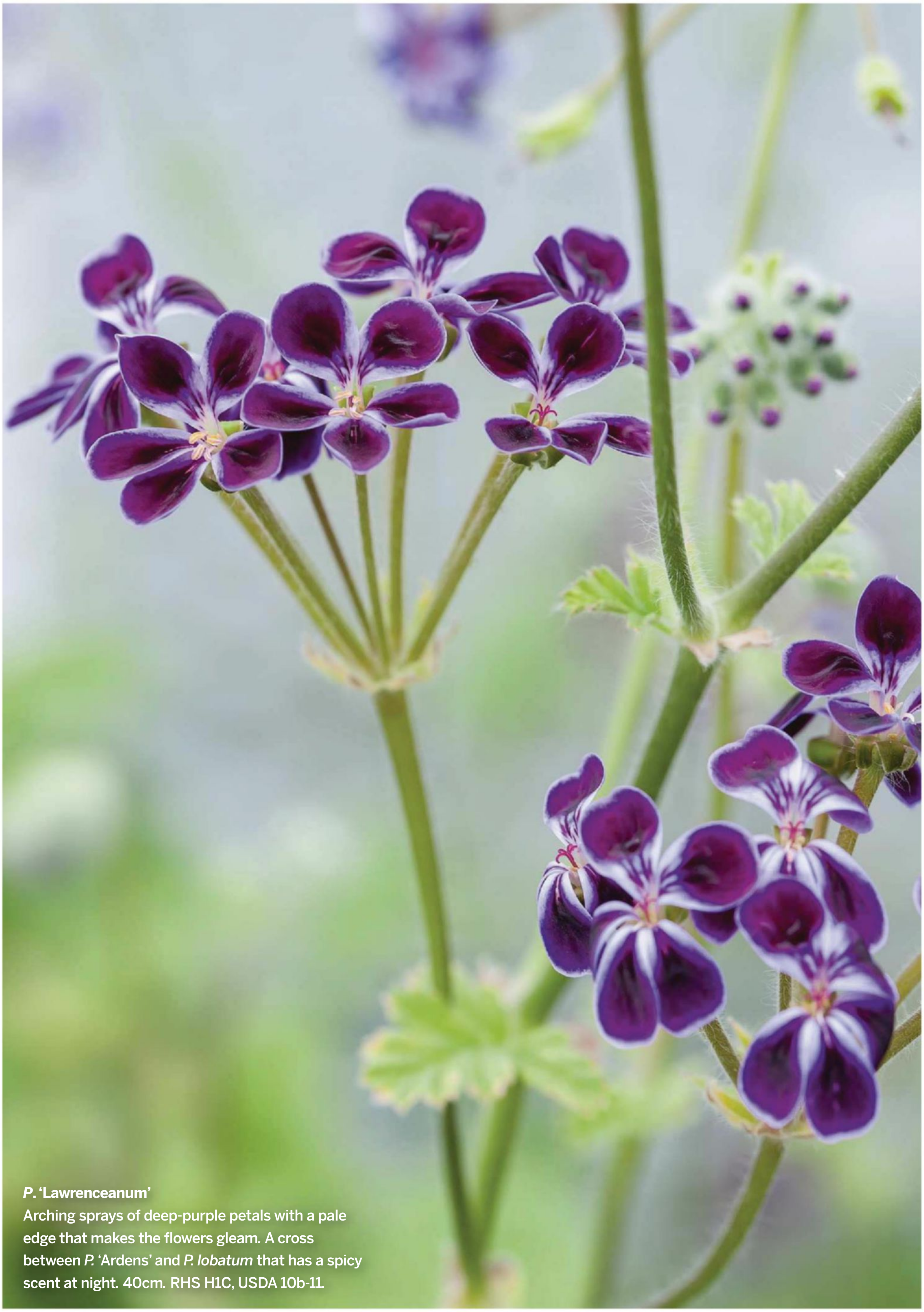
***P.* ‘Schottii’**
From the same parent as *P.* ‘Ardens’, this has feathery, silvered foliage and larger flowers. The petals are a reddish purple and marked with black lines. Easy to propagate from stem cuttings. 40cm. AGM. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



***P.* ‘Splendide’**
A neat, compact mound of silver-grey foliage that is smothered from late spring with carmine and pale-pink flowers. Thought to be a hybrid of *P. tricolor* and *P. ovale*.
20cm. AGM. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



***P.* ‘Deerwood Lavender Lass’**
A primary hybrid raised in the USA in the 1990s, this is a sprawling plant with tight clusters of pale-pink flowers. Starts flowering in late April and is still going strong in October. 60cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.



P. 'Lawrenceanum'
Arching sprays of deep-purple petals with a pale edge that makes the flowers gleam. A cross between *P.* 'Ardens' and *P. lobatum* that has a spicy scent at night. 40cm. RHS H1C, USDA 10b-11.

MANY THANKS TO FIBREX NURSERIES IN WARWICKSHIRE WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

Romke van de Kaa

The accidental gardener who worked at Great Dixter, ran a nursery with Piet Oudolf and is now one of the Netherlands' most respected garden journalists

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Nothing in my career has been planned," says Romke van de Kaa. "My life has been a series of chance encounters and lucky twists of fortune. Like in a garden, it is sometimes better not to plan too much, to learn how to just let things happen."

Serendipity has taken Romke into beautiful gardens and to work with the great gardening personalities of the past 50 years. He is now a journalist in the Netherlands, and many Dutch gardeners will tell you that they get their gardening advice from Romke's articles.

Although as a child he had a small garden plot of his own Romke was more interested in the wild flora and fauna around the dunes near his home in the Netherlands. He went to university to study marine biology and imagined a life investigating the seas. Love intervened and when his English girlfriend was feeling homesick Romke decided that he should move to Britain.

"This was before the Common Market and I didn't know how I would earn a living," he explains. Since the age of 11, though, he had worked every school holiday in the bulb fields of the Van Tubergen company, so gardening seemed a possibility. "I knew about bulbs and thought maybe I could get work as a gardener so I asked the nurseryman Michael Hoog to give me a letter of recommendation."

Armed with his letter, Romke went to the RHS garden at Wisley and there, by one of the many twists of fate that have marked his career, he met Chris Brickell, a bulb expert who knew Hoog. "I was offered a job to start a few days later working under Ken Aslet, on the rock garden." Aslet was an alpine expert and a great teacher. "Most days after work he walked around the gardens with me until dark, talking about the plants – I was very eager to learn about everything."

A day off from work to visit a village pub in East Sussex that served real ale provided another lucky encounter. "In those days pubs closed during the afternoon so we went to visit a local garden." The village was Northiam and the garden Great Dixter.

"On his hands and knees in the border, with dachshunds sleeping on a tweed jacket on the path, was a gardener. We talked, and I learned that he was a Mr Christopher Lloyd, the owner. Before I left I gave him my address and a few days later I received a letter asking if I would be his head gardener.

"I asked around my colleagues at Wisley about this Mr Lloyd and the only person who had heard of him was Ursula Buchan who had read a book he had written about clematis. Almost on a whim, I went to work at Dixter."

This was the long, hot summer of 1976. "It was difficult in the garden, all the plants were wilting and on my very first day we had our first clash. Christopher Lloyd loved an argument and so do I, so we were forever arguing and enjoying it. Of course, he had the advantage of being the boss."

During summers of working in the garden and winter nights spent talking plants and playing chess, their working relationship developed into friendship. "We moved from Mr Lloyd, to Mr Christopher to, finally, Christo." While at Great Dixter, Romke became gardening friends with Beth Chatto, Elizabeth Strangman and other luminaries of the plant world. On his days off he visited plant experts David Scott and Valerie Finnis, and talked plants with the horticulturist Martyn Rix. "Yes, I was happy at Dixter but I had my own dreams to pursue and we were both sad when I left."

After a short period working in Ireland, Romke's roots drew him back to the Netherlands. "I missed the language, I missed the intellectual challenge of using a language well and I wanted to write." Romke had started writing articles for *Amateur Gardening* and now back in the Netherlands became a full-time garden writer, offering gardening advice.

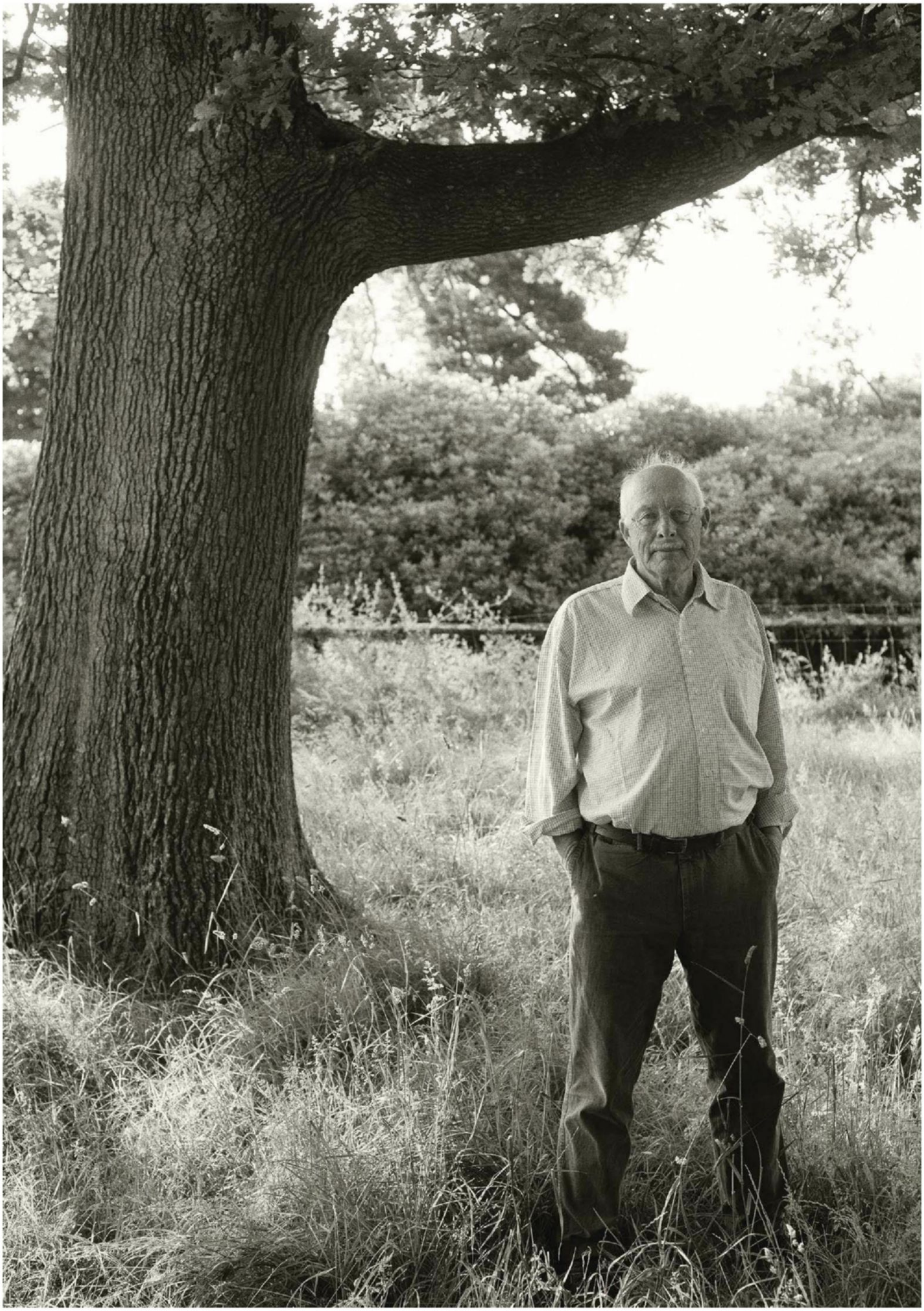
In the 1980s an encounter with a young garden architect, Piet Oudolf, resulted in the pair setting up a plant nursery, which soon led the rising interest in grasses and herbaceous perennials, becoming a Mecca for gardeners. The nursery could not contain two strong-headed, larger-than-life personalities, so the pair parted company and Romke set up his own nursery and began to focus on his journalism.

"Writing can be lonely, but what I miss are not the plants or the gardens but the people," he says. My work with plants has brought me into contact with wonderful, interesting people, many of whom are now friends. And it is their friendships that I am most happy about."

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Romke's writing at romkevandekaa.nl and turn the page to read his feature on the Goldhoorn Gardens in the Netherlands.

NEXT MONTH Chilean landscape designer Juan Grimm.

> *"On his hands and knees in the border, with dachshunds sleeping on a tweed jacket, was Christopher Lloyd. A few days later I received a letter asking if I'd be his head gardener"*



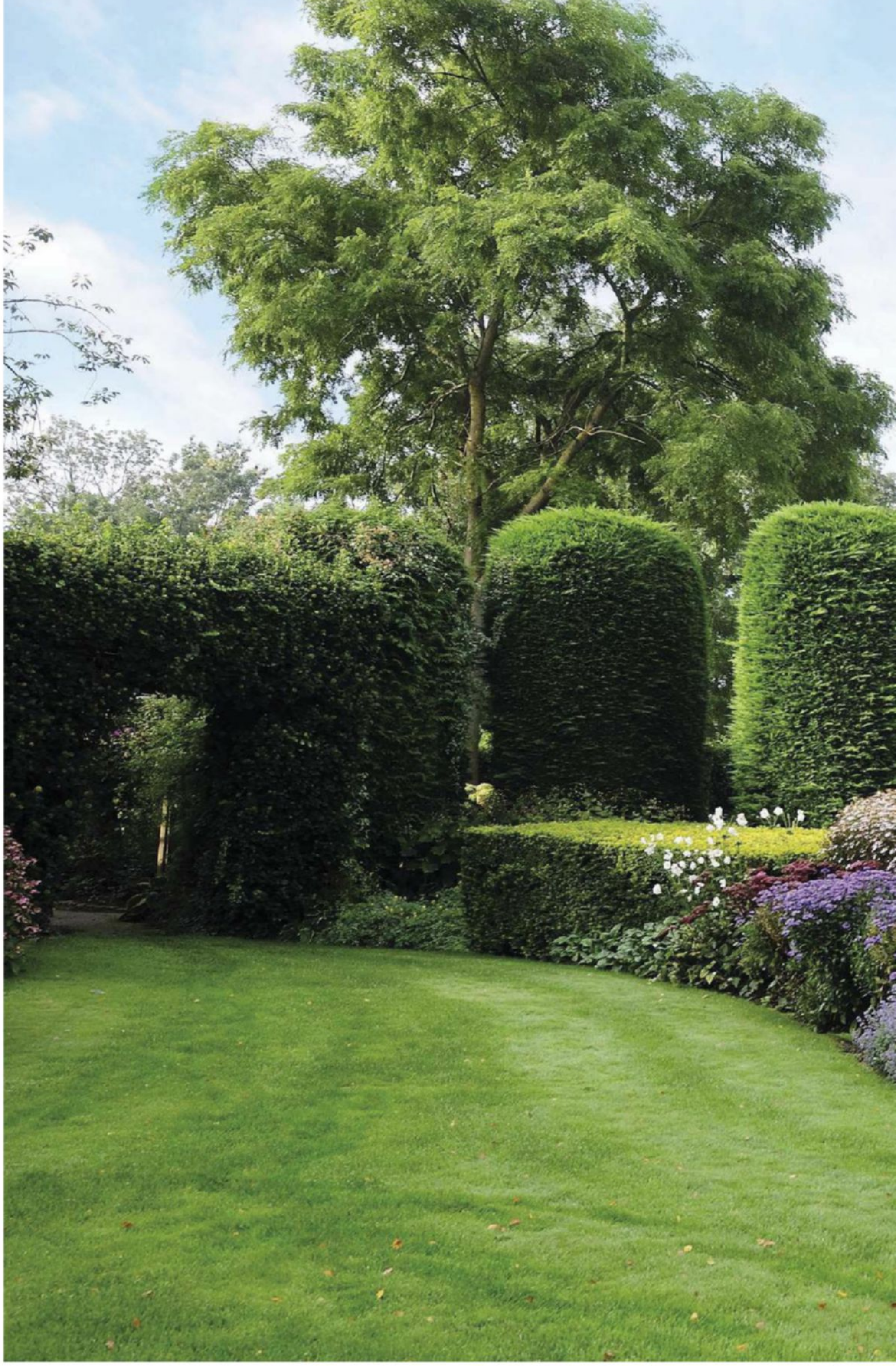
Elly Kloosterboer grew up not far from the garden, Goldhoorn, she has created on her husband's family farm. Her parents moved to this area called Noordoostpolder in the early 1950s. Like many Dutch families, they came here to start a new life on land that had only been reclaimed from the sea in the 1930s. Her husband's family were among the very first raft of settlers to this virgin land, and named their farm after the area to the north from where they had come, namely Goldhoorn.

Noordoostpolder is big-sky country: a flat, windswept plain, characterised by a grid of straight roads that cross one another at right angles – a bend in the road is unheard of – out of which Goldhoorn Gardens appears like a mirage; in summer an oasis of rambling roses and clematis among the fields of chicory and carrots, and even in autumn bursting with imaginative blends of colour.

Turn the page for Romke's interview with Elly.

In brief

Name Goldhoorn Gardens.
What Private Dutch garden divided by hedging into areas with rich planting, strong structure and a large, ornamental pond.
Where Bant, Noordoostpolder, the Netherlands.
Size 4,000 square metres.
Climate Temperate.
Soil Heavy, alkaline clay, improved with mushroom compost.
Hardiness rating USDA 9.



Above Elly Kloosterboer at work in her garden.

Right In a curving border, autumnal plants, including *Kalimeris incisa* 'Blue Star', *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Jungfrau', *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' and *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona', provide bold colour softened by grasses,including *Calamagrostis brachytricha* and *C.* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'. A path through the ivy-covered archway leads to the pond.

On fertile ground

Under a big sky amid sweeping plains, Goldhoorn is a richly planted garden on fertile land reclaimed from the sea

WORDS **ROMKE VAN DE KAA** PHOTOGRAPHS **SIETSKE DE VRIES**

▷ **What inspired your garden?**

I always wanted to have a garden with a large pond, but my husband and I were too busy running the farm to garden. When we stopped working, I felt I could make a start. I knew nothing about plants or design. All my inspiration came from books and magazines.

Where did you begin?

I started with the pond. There was enough room to make a large one. A digger came and made a huge hole, which was lined with polythene. The rest of the garden grew organically around the pond.

Did you have anything else in mind?

I had romantic visions of walls overflowing with clematis and rambling roses. But brick walls are expensive. And walls don't really fit in with this wide-open landscape. So instead I grow climbers against metal frames of a type that are made to form the skeletons for reinforced concrete. But first I needed windbreaks to make gardening possible at all.

So was the wind your main challenge?

Yes, especially the strong southwesterlies, but also the soil.

But isn't the soil here famously fertile?

It is, but it's also very heavy clay that cracks in times of drought. We get fissures so wide you can park your bicycle in them. That makes any attempt at gardening futile. Gardening here starts with improving the soil.

What about draining or irrigation?

The water table of the area is managed artificially. And on this retentive soil I don't have to water plants very often. But of course roses and clematis like it moist, so I run a length of perforated hose along their roots. ▷

This page, clockwise from top

Solid hedges of beech and yew are brightened by plantings of *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' and *Hydrangea macrophylla*.

The pond, with its pretty bridge, is the central feature of the garden, around which the rest of the garden has been developed.

A summerhouse overlooking the pond is almost overshadowed by the tall *Miscanthus* x *giganteus*. In the foreground *Persicaria amplexicaulis* adds colour.

A semi-circle of wooden decking bordered by a clump of the grass *Pennisetum alopecuroides*, offers a quiet spot to sit and enjoy the pond.

Facing page

Elly aims to give her borders a long season using sedums, dahlias and annuals, such as the towering, purple-flowered *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*.

Elly's tips on creating a new garden

I like to use different types of hedging. The russet of beech in winter makes a lovely contrast with the deep green of yew. I also create a most satisfactory hedge out of ivy grown on an upright iron frame.

Remember when placing seats and benches you won't always want to sit in the sun. We love to have our morning coffee in the sun, but most of the time we prefer shade.

If you want a bridge across your pond, place both at the same time. I added a bridge four years after the pond and had to destroy half the garden to get it into place.

Plan for the surface of a pond to be mainly water. Covering the surface with waterlilies – as I do – can look lovely, but you need to keep them in check. I plant mine in baskets and even then I have to reduce them every year.

Even in a garden overflowing with plants, you need quiet spots to sit and just ponder. I have seats outside the main part of the garden, from where you can sit and look out over the countryside for miles. I've also deliberately left one room empty, so you can simply sit and look at the sky or meditate.

Grasses, including *Pennisetum alopecuroides* and the tall *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Ferner Osten', a cultivar selected by Ernst Pagels, tumble over a narrow path.

> *"I learned how to subdivide a garden into separate spaces, to create surprises round every corner"*

▷ **How has the garden developed?**
First of all I tackled the front garden, which was not much more than a lawn with a few decrepit conifers. I had some help from a professional garden designer there. Later on I went to college and followed a course in gardening. I learned there were more trees available than birches and alders, which is why you now see a *Cercidiphyllum* and a *Parrotia* in the garden. I also learned how to subdivide a garden into separate spaces, to create surprises round every corner, and to make hidden areas on the outside of the garden from where you look outward across the surrounding fields.

How did you define these separate spaces?
By using a variety of hedges, such as yew, beech and privet, as well as ivy grown on metal supports. And by surrounding parts of the garden by screens of roses and clematis.

Do you also use paths?
I do. At first I used ground bark for the paths; it was pretty, but not at all satisfactory. Especially once I opened to the public. People complained about straining their ankles. Now I use a loam-coloured, finely ground stone. The paths are edged with heavy cubes of granite sourced in Belgium.

Do you have any favourite plants?
I like to keep the garden attractive until the first frosts. I use late-flowering perennials, such as asters and sedums, but I'm also fond of self-seeding annuals, such as red-leaved *Atriplex* and *Amaranthus*. And I love dahlias.

You're a garden designer yourself now. Do you have any advice for beginners?
Learn about your soil, and about how to improve it. My heavy clay has only become manageable with a heavy topdressing of mushroom compost each year. On sand you might need a different approach, but everything starts with the soil.

Do you have any regrets?
If I were to make a pond again, I would situate it in a place where I could enjoy it from my window. Now I only see it when I go there and sit near it. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Klutenweg 13, 8314 PB Bant, the Netherlands.
Tel +31 (0)527 261525.
Website goldhoorngardens.nl
Open March to June, Friday to Saturday, 10am-5pm. Other times by appointment.

9 of Elly's favourite plants for autumn

1 *Pennisetum alopecuroides*
An ornamental grass that stays relatively low. Although flower spikes eventually disintegrate, it remains a lovely parchment colour all winter. 1.2m. RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b†.

2 *Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra'
A red-coloured grass that goes well with late-flowering sedums. Not always easy, but does well on water-retentive soils. 40cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'
Long flowering and appears to be immune to all pests and diseases. A good cutting flower. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

4 *Amaranthus caudatus*
Annual that self-seeds abundantly, although it is still good practice to sow some every year to fill any unexpected gaps. Lovely with hot-coloured dahlias. 1.5m. RHS H2, USDA 2a-11.

5 *Helianthemum* 'Lemon Queen'
A tall, unassuming perennial, that is a lovely shade of pale yellow. Always manages to cheer up a late-season garden. 2m. RHS H4, USDA 4b-9a.

6 *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona'
Some older cultivars have a tendency to fall apart, but this one stands up straight. 75cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3b-9b.

7 *Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude'
A well-known cultivar, but one still much in use. The seedheads are cheerful in winter, especially when covered with snow. 60cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3b-9b.

8 *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'
Another familiar cultivar but one that remains unsurpassed for its long-lasting flowers and seedheads. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

9 *Leycesteria formosa*
A deciduous shrub known as pheasant berry with delicate ovate leaves and pendulous racemes of flowers. 2m. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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5. MARK BOLTON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Tree of life

In the last of his occasional series on gardens, nature and serendipity, the writer and broadcaster Richard Mabey reflects on how all life, from simple slime mould to riotous grandchildren, has a role to play in the improvised drama of his Norfolk garden

WORDS RICHARD MABEY ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

Most early autumns a curious yellow curd appears scattered across our meadow. The patches are frothy and shapeless and look more like some excremental fall-out than anything living. It's called 'dog-vomit' fungus, but that is an insulting misnomer. I prefer to be reminded of lightly cooked scrambled egg. And it's not a fungus or even a plant, but a slime mould, a kind of organism that is now on a branch of its own on the great Tree of Life.

Slime moulds are truly astonishing creatures. They spend much of the year as a swarm of microscopic, single-celled organisms browsing on yeasts and bacteria. Then in the autumn, or whenever there is an abundance of food, the cells come together and form the communal yellow splodges. At this point the aggregates metamorphose into something resembling a fungus, putting up fruiting bodies and dispersing cell-rich spores, so that the whole cycle begins again.

They have one other extraordinary property. During aggregation they form critically efficient channels between sources of food. In one recent experiment, scientists laid out oat-flakes (a favourite slime snack) in the geographical disposition of the stations on the Tokyo underground system. The slime-mould swarm scoped the whole area, then gradually began to refine the links between the flakes (along which food is shared) to echo the tracks of the underground train lines, sometimes finding even more direct links.

> *"Logs sprout bejewelled miniature toadstools – coral spots, dead man's fingers and clusters of minute bracket fungi whose identity have me puzzled"*

Slime moulds seem to me a metaphor for the social and ecological life of gardens. Plants and creatures and ideas swarm about in the ether and are then brought together in these foci of activity, and come into flower and seed, ensuring their own continuance. In my two columns earlier in the year I talked about how trees, planted and self-sown, form the architectural framework of the garden, which is both resilient and dynamic. Then how a legion of wild species – seeds borne on the wind, lurking underground, carried in on our shoes and car tyres from trips and foreign holidays – combine to form a rich, spontaneous subtext to the deliberate plantings.

In the autumn it is the turn of young human mammals to be the unpredictable garden intruders; the slime mould in its cell stage. Grandchildren swarm in the wood in this season, climbing trees, making fires and devising incomprehensible feats of orienteering and tricks with plants. Most of all they love feral cooking. I've taught them how to make what we called twists when I was a kid, shaving the bark off an ash or hazel twig, wrapping a ribbon of unleavened dough round it and baking it in the embers of the fire. Their patience and manual dexterity are not always great (their ages are six to 12) and their confections are often gobbled badly burnt or barely cooked, and covered in a relish of dead leaves, soot and soil. They eat them with an indiscriminate gusto unrecognisable from their indoor eating habits. Now they're moving on to their own inventions, stuffing Bramleys with garden berries and golden syrup and baking them in silver foil.

We've not yet fire-seared the horse mushrooms and parasols that sprout under the cherry trees, but equivalents of the slime-mould's fruiting stage are resplendent everywhere. Lichens effloresce on branches in the autumn rains, and the chrome-yellow *Xanthoria parietina* starbursts across the walls. Logs sprout bejewelled miniature toadstools – coral spots, dead man's fingers and clusters of minute bracket fungi whose identity still have me puzzled. As for the piles of windblown twiggery we stack for kindling, anything can crawl out – stoats, hedgehogs, sexton beetles, sometimes a small child. Mostly they just hunch down, infinitely slow-moving statuary whose shrinkage shows that the capriciousness of decay echoes that of growth.

Autumn is the season in which our chief piece of actual garden statuary, the Hogtable, comes into its own. I'd long hoped for a bird-feeder that was bespoke to our house, not something off a production line, and dreamed of making one from recycled bits of old farm machinery, so that we could enjoy the poetic irony of birds gorging themselves on relics of the agribusiness that had so damaged their populations. It was too much for my limited craft skills but we were blessed with a fortunate family connection here. The campfire-loving children's mum is artist Kate Munro, who was responsible for some of the wood and metal installations at the Eden Project. She came up with the brilliant notion of modelling the feeder on the giant hogweed that had graced our garden for the previous two years.

So for a week in summer she and her family became the artists in residence. She made the stalks from two debarked hunks of a sycamore that had come down in a gale. Then she sat among the meadow flowers welding together two giant umbels from an extraordinary collection of rural junk – spiral fence-posts, coil springs, harrow tines. When it was finished we installed it next to the pond, and it looked so beautiful, so exactly right among the skeletons of cow parsley, that I could hardly bear to disfigure it with fat balls and peanut bags. The very first visitor, a few hours later, was a female sparrowhawk, perched on an iron stalk and dreaming of prey to come…

The premise of this short series has been that gardens can be contrived as stages for improvised dramas, just as much as for shows meticulously scripted by the gardener. We've been lucky with the performances up here in Norfolk, with nothing truly malevolent abusing our hospitality. And we have a window on the fact that change and invention – the engines of the natural world – can be just as exciting and delightful as the long-settled or the minutely planned.

Flavour of the garden

Gravetye Manor in West Sussex is renowned for its glorious gardens, but in a wild orchard on the edge of the garden, head gardener Tom Coward is reintroducing a taste of the garden's fruitful past

WORDS TOM COWARD PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

This page At Gravetye Manor, head gardener Tom Coward has been renovating the gardens since 2010, giving William Robinson's 19th-century vision a contemporary twist. Here at the back of the hotel, the fluffy grass *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Silberfeder' catches the autumn light in what was once Robinson's flower garden.

Facing page In the wilder orchard, Tom harvests apples, which though grown for their beauty are all put to use.

Every season has its joys in the garden, but if I had to pick a month it would be October. The light has a special quality at this time of year, somehow making colours appear richer as the borders reach their climax. This last display before the first frosts set in can feel like the garden shaking a fist at the approaching winter. Every drop of sunshine feels like the precious last sip from the bottle and best of all, this is the peak of the apple season.

Our orchard dates back to the 1890s when the charismatic garden writer William Robinson first moved to Gravetye. The romance of carefully shaped trees rising out of wildflower meadows was an essential element to his wild garden. He chose his site carefully, on the edge of the property using the orchard to help blend the garden in to the surrounding forest. The sheltered, two-acre, south-facing slope is quite protected from frosts and cold winds and warms up in the summer to ripen some amazing fruit. Most of Robinson's trees have long gone, but a few ancient specimens still remain, mainly 'Blenheim Orange' and a few 'Crawley Beauty'. So as part of our garden restoration project we decided we had to plant a new generation of trees. This was essential to preserve this historic feature, and exciting to develop such a special crop for Gravetye's Michelin-starred restaurant.

The harvest starts in late August with 'Discovery' and runs deep into November, with 'Braeburn' probably being last. Most of our cultivars ripen around the second or

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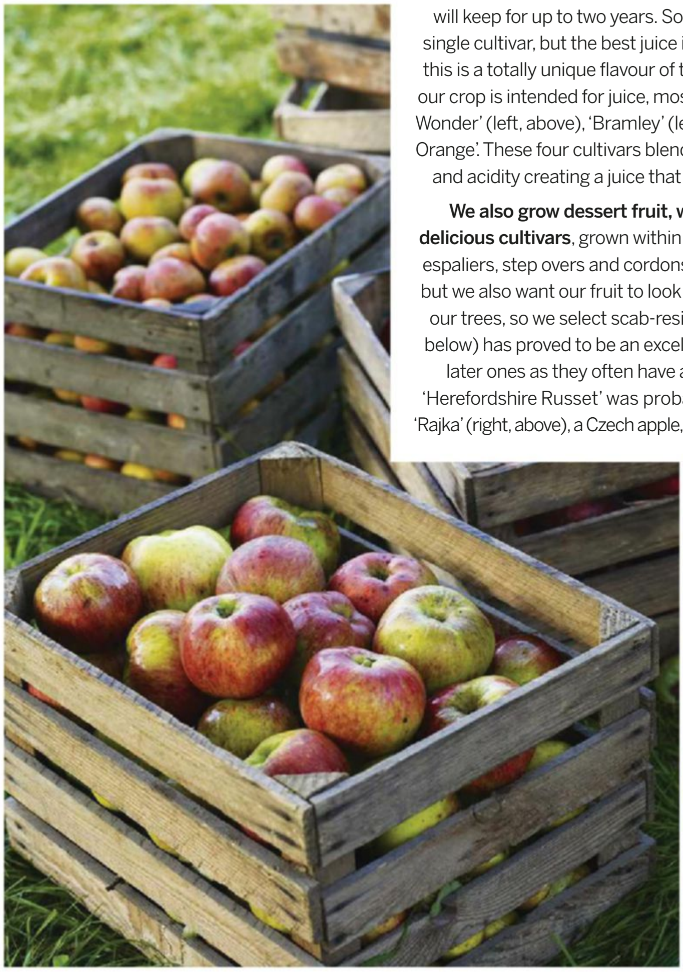
APPLES FOR DIFFERENT USES AT GRAVETYE MANOR

In Gravetye's restaurant, cooking apples are always in demand and Chef likes to save some to use throughout winter. For this we hand pick the highest-quality fruit, and 'Bramley' and 'Blenheim Orange' are two of the favourites. Both have such characteristic flavours, which only seem to improve with storage. 'Annie Elizabeth' has also proved to have excellent flavour and is one of the best for holding its shape with cooking. But even in a busy kitchen there is only so much fruit Chef can get through and so the bulk of our crop is made into juice. This means harvesting our big trees is quite simple as it doesn't matter if the fruit gets a little bruised. We just lay out a dust sheet or tarpaulin under the tree to keep the fruit clean and shake the apples down. The important thing is to make sure the fruit is totally ripe; the longer it can be left on the tree the better.

Once the crop has been gathered, we take it to a local juice maker who can press, bottle and pasteurise the juice for us, which will keep for up to two years. Sometimes we bottle the juice of a single cultivar, but the best juice is a blend of the whole orchard as this is a totally unique flavour of the garden itself. Since the bulk of our crop is intended for juice, most of our young trees are 'Howgate Wonder' (left, above), 'Bramley' (left, below), 'Falstaff' and 'Blenheim Orange'. These four cultivars blend beautifully to balance sweetness and acidity creating a juice that we are really quite pleased with.

We also grow dessert fruit, which are the sweetest, most delicious cultivars, grown within the walls of the kitchen garden as espaliers, step overs and cordons. Good flavour is most important but we also want our fruit to look beautiful. We never want to spray our trees, so we select scab-resistant cultivars. 'Red Devil' (right, below) has proved to be an excellent early cultivar, but I prefer the later ones as they often have a richer, more complex flavour. 'Herefordshire Russet' was probably the tastiest this season, but 'Rajka' (right, above), a Czech apple, was one of the best late performers.



▷ third week of October and although the rest of the garden always needs attention, this is a relatively quiet time. So to set a few days aside to deal with a glut of wonderful fruit is a real pleasure. The trees we planted some five years ago are rewarding us with their first decent crop and the years of regeneration pruning of our old specimens are beginning to pay off with a bumper harvest this season.

Our orchard is designed as a wild garden and organised totally differently to commercial production. Instead of straight rows of dwarf trees, our apples are spaced erratically, and interplanted with thousands of naturalised bulbs. Each cultivar is grafted on vigorous and semi-vigorous rootstocks, so the trees will become tall, majestic specimens, trained into traditional, open-centered, vase-shaped trees. We still expect the crop to pay for itself, and every fruit we produce is used.

Developing fruit growing at Gravetye has been one of the most exciting parts of my job. And to see diners in the restaurant, enjoying fruit picked from the trees outside, is one of the best rewards. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Gravetye Manor Hotel & Restaurant, Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex RH19 4LJ.

Tel 01342 810567.

Web gravetyemanor.co.uk

TOM'S TIPS FOR GROWING APPLES

Apples need full sun to grow well, but cookers and early cultivars can take a little shade. Frost pockets and windy, exposed sites are best avoided and all apples hate getting waterlogged.

Decide how you'll use the fruit before planting. Large orchard trees work well in a wild garden and produce lots of fruit, but it can be a lot of work to deal with big crops. Espaliers or cordons look smart and produce the best-quality fruit from the smallest space but take a lot of work to do well.

Take time to research and taste fruit. Many gardens and nurseries have apple days, which are a perfect opportunity to find cultivars that are special to you or your area.

Take time to decide on the best rootstock for your tree as this will govern its ultimate height and vigour. Dwarf rootstocks are more manageable and can fit into smaller gardens but may need care, such as staking and weeding. More vigorous rootstocks will give you a much bigger tree, with bigger crops that will live for much longer.

Control the environment. Young apples hate having their feet grassed over, and if the soil is kept open and you mulch around the tree's roots they have a much better chance of establishing. We control weeds around our trees and give them a thick layer of home-made compost each year.

The garden requires little more than a spot of daily weeding from owner Annemie.

A garden full of flowers, bees and butterflies from March to November is what we all dream of. And if we were told that that same garden could be achieved with no watering, no dividing, and almost no pest control, we'd know for sure that the dream was too good to be true. Or would we?

Annemie and Guy Brusselmans' garden in Sint-Amands, a rural community between Antwerp and Brussels, proves that the dream is eminently achievable – and more beautiful than we had dared imagine. Designed by renowned nurseryman and prairie-planting advocate Jan Spruyt, it is, for nine months of the year, an ever-changing kaleidoscope of colour; dark tulips, maroon *Aquilegia vulgaris* var. *stellata* 'Black Barlow' and wine-red *Geranium phaeum* giving way to pink achilleas and orange, ra-ra-skirted heleniums in summer and, later, the buffs, reds and gold of autumn foliage and grasses, punctuated by huge drifts of asters. In late November the picture changes again to something less colourful but still full of interest as seedheads assume mantles of frost or snow. "There are only about two weeks of the year when there's nothing going on," says Annemie. "And that's in late February just after we've cut everything down – but even then, you can see the bulbs nosing through the soil, and we start to imagine the delights to come."

The garden's success is down to two things. The first is Jan's clever design, which has only one or two shrubs used as

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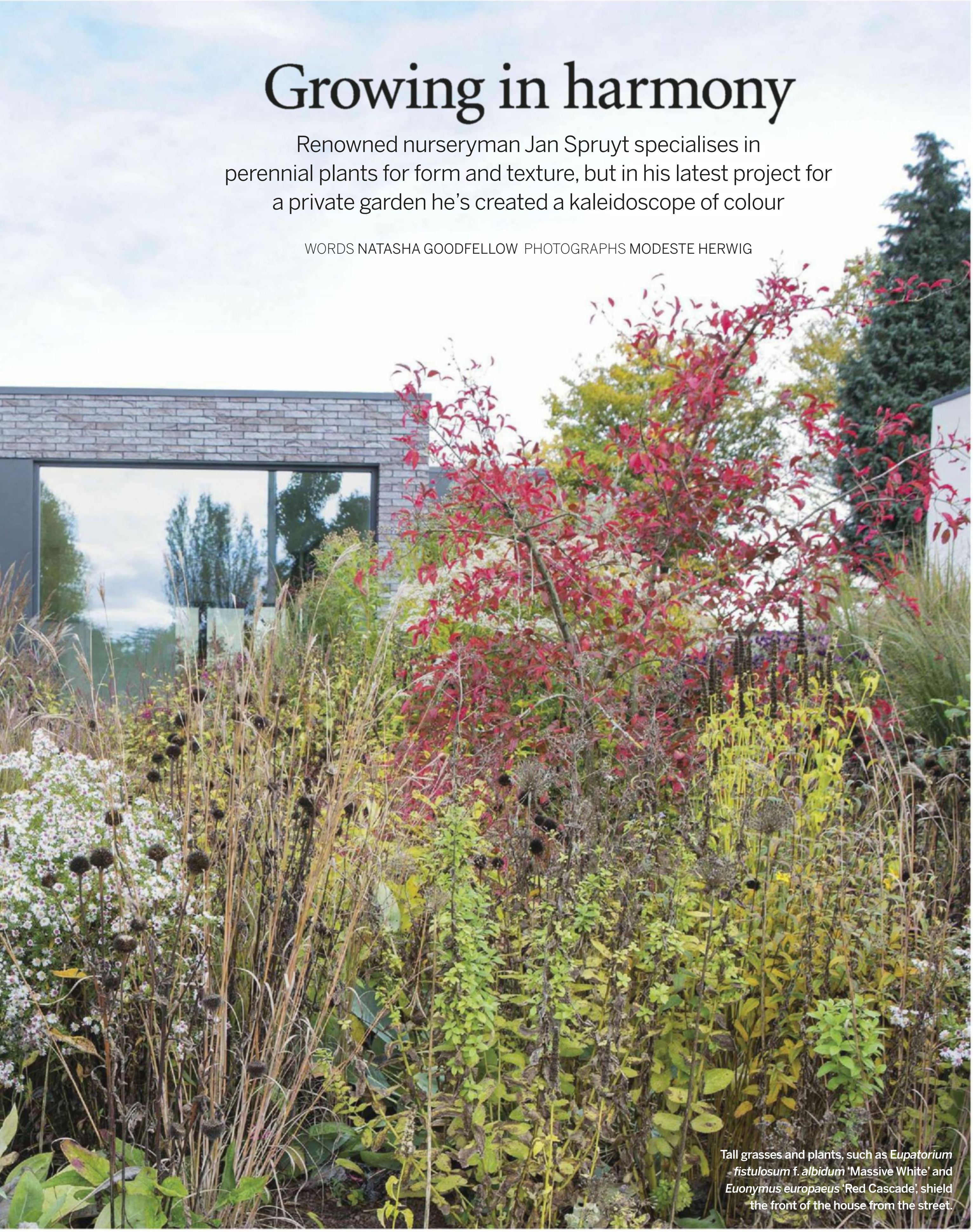
In brief

What Private, rural garden that makes clever use of perennial planting. Designed by nurseryman Jan Spruyt as a low-maintenance, prairie-style garden.
Where Sint-Amands, Belgium.
Size 500 square metres.
Soil Sandy, acidic loam improved by chalk.
Climate Winters can be -14°C; summers can reach 36°C.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

Growing in harmony

Renowned nurseryman Jan Spruyt specialises in perennial plants for form and texture, but in his latest project for a private garden he's created a kaleidoscope of colour

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **MODESTE HERWIG**



Tall grasses and plants, such as *Eupatorium fistulosum* f. *albidum* 'Massive White' and *Euonymus europaeus* 'Red Cascade', shield the front of the house from the street.

> *"There are only two weeks of the year when there's nothing going on, but even then, you can see the bulbs nosing through the soil"*

▷ trees, a good number of bulbs and around 2,000 herbaceous perennials. "People always assume perennials are a lot of work," says Jan, whose highly regarded nursery Vaste-plantenkwekerij Jan Spruyt-Van der Jeugd, is just outside Sint-Amands. "But they don't have to be. Prairie-style planting, using perennials that grow in harmony with one another rather than competing for nutrients and light, requires none of the lifting, dividing and replanting of the traditional herbaceous border."

That's not to say there is no work at all. Annemie and Guy still remember planting the garden back in the autumn of 2012. "It took the two of us 28 days to plant everything and then another 28 days to pour the lava mulch – all 55 tonnes of it – between the plants," says Guy.

Since then the biggest task has been the annual cutting down of the seedheads in late February. Watering has rarely been needed. "Watering disturbs the plants," says Jan. "They will make more leaves, causing more evaporation and they'll suffer more from weakness and disease." Pest control barely features either, since non-native plants are not hosts for indigenous insects, although they still provide pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies, as several ▷

This page, from top

Sinuous paths wind their way through the garden, giving the impression of walking among the plants.

A *Carpinus betulus* 'Fastigiata' hedge shields the house from sun in summer but lets in light in winter.

The black shed is the perfect foil for purple flowers and the bright, yellow-green foliage of *Amsonia tabernaemontana* 'Stella Azul' (a selection of Jan's).

Facing page

A mass of planting, including *Symphyotrichum laeve* 'Calliope', *Symphyotrichum novi-belgii* 'Neron' and *Eurybia radula* 'August Sky' creates a colourful display outside the kitchen window.

5 tips for creating a colourful, architectural garden

1 Choose floriferous, fast-growing plants that cover the soil very quickly and need no maintenance other than cutting back once a year in late February. Some popular choices include *Alchemilla mollis* and *Symphytum* 'Hidcote Blue', although these are not for prairie planting.

2 Choose plants that don't self-seed and your weeding time will be dramatically reduced. Grasses, including *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent', and *Andropogon* 'JS Purple Konza', and perennials, such as *Symphyotrichum turbinellum* 'El Fin' (both selections of Jan's), are good starting points.

3 Use a deep (7cm) layer of lava rocks (2-8mm in size) as mulch. Not only do they prevent weeds, conserve moisture in the soil and protect against frost, they add to the beauty of the garden, and never need replacing.

4 Plant in gravel. Make a bed in which just 10 per cent of the depth is soil and fill the rest with gravel. It will be too dry for weeds, but plants such as lavenders, sedums, helianthemums and erigerons will thrive.

5 Assess which plants are invasive or outgrowing their space, before you cut them down in February. Then take action or you won't remember which plant is which.

"Using perennials that grow in harmony with one another requires none of the lifting, dividing and replanting of the traditional herbaceous border"

▷ bee hotels attest. The same goes for diseases: asters are known for suffering from powdery mildew, but here it is not a problem. "My explanation is that because we don't use fertilisers, the cell walls are stronger and harder and the spores cannot penetrate," says Jan. "Rainfall contributes around 40kg of nitrogen to the garden annually and the soil doesn't need any more than that. Prairie plants actually improve the soil."

The only task of any real significance is weeding, and it's Annemie's expertise in this regard that is the other chief reason the garden looks so good – she whips out any unwanted seedlings before they have a chance to gain a foothold. "When I sense my clients aren't really interested in gardens, I'll tend to use drifts of just one plant," says Jan, "so that any weed seedlings are easier to spot. But I could feel Annemie had the hands for it so I combined different plants. She is without a doubt my best guardian."

This sense of confidence also allowed Jan to include some indigenous plants (which by nature tend to self-seed) alongside rarer and more unusual forms that he's bred at his nursery. Among his proudest achievements is *Coreopsis tripteris* 'Mostenveld', which at 2m-plus towers above most plants of the genus and, along with statuesque grasses, provides structure to the garden, particularly in late summer and autumn. "In spring we can see right across the garden," says Annemie, "but as the seasons progress, it begs to be discovered."

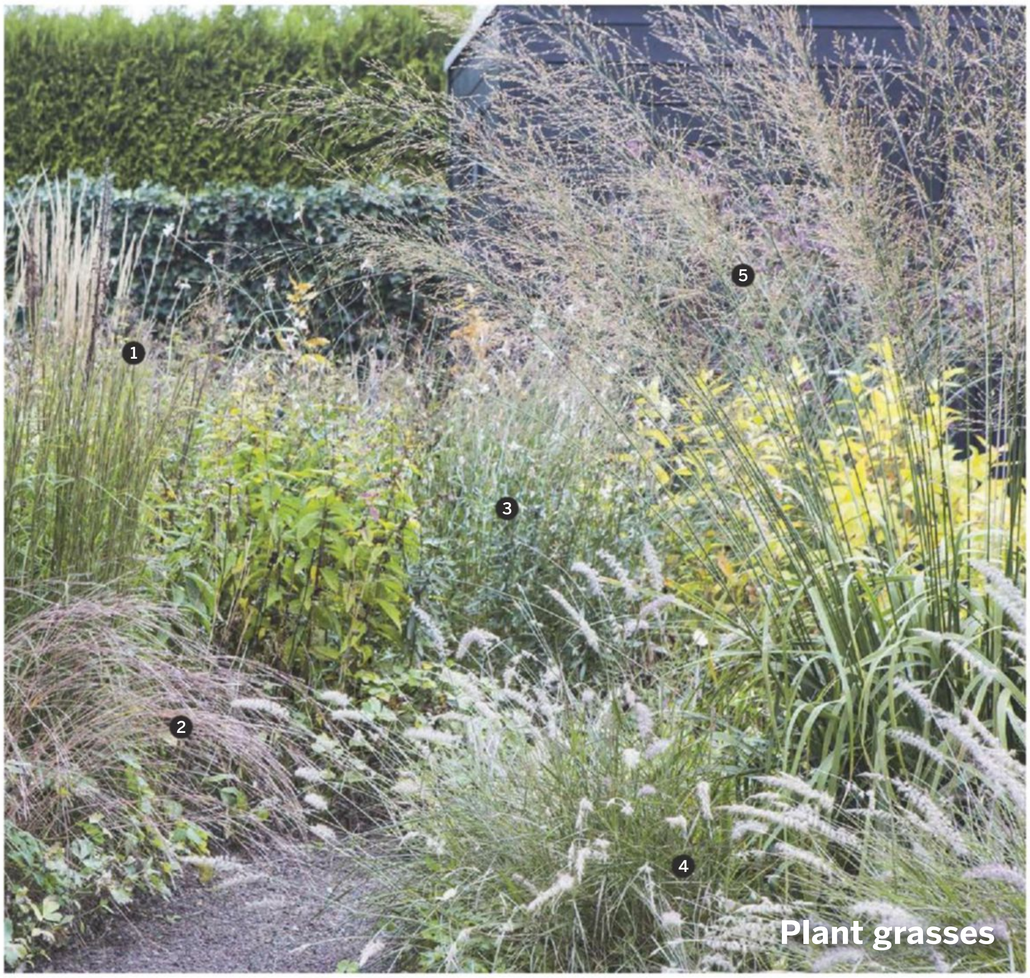
Annemie takes all the weeding in her stride. "Before I only had a lawn and roses and I always wanted to do something like this. Now, tending to the garden is my hobby. I walk through it every day and if I see a weed, I just pull it out." ◻

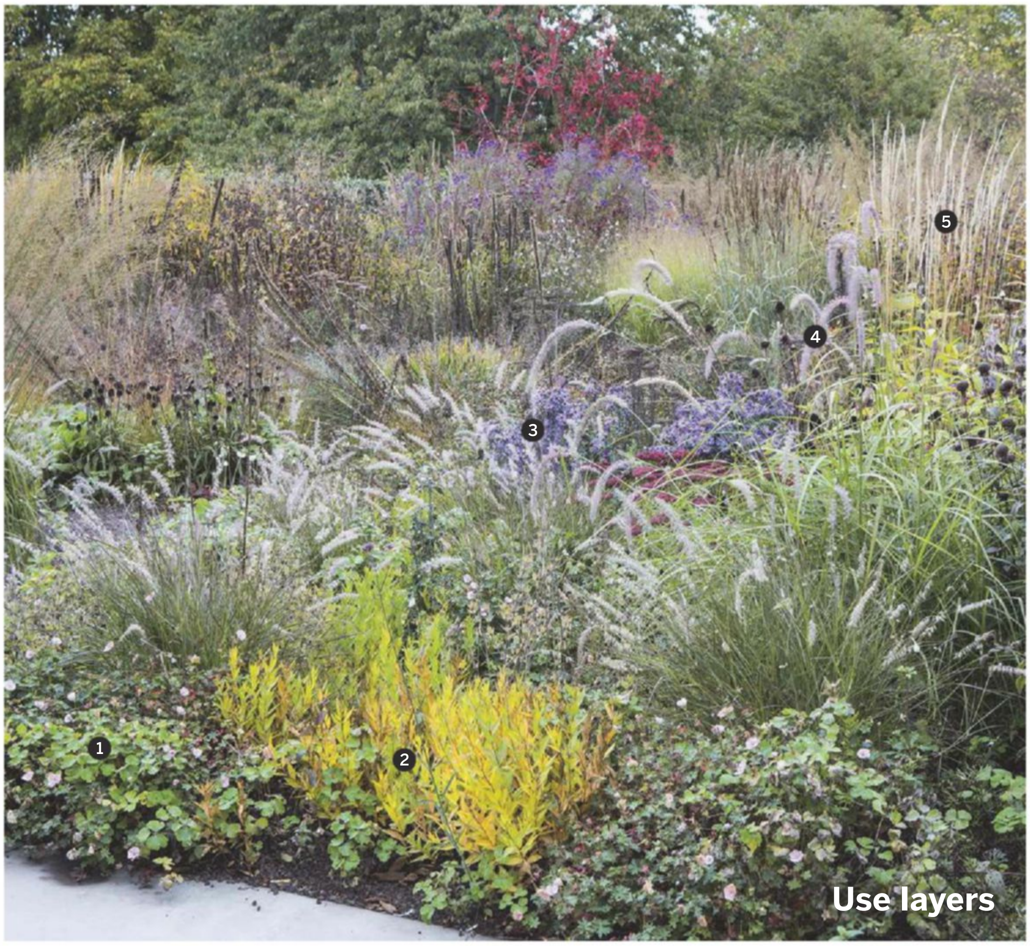
USEFUL INFORMATION

Jan Spruyt's nursery is open to the public on Fridays, 8am-3pm, and on selected Saturdays. See **vasteplant.be** for details.

Create focal points

Include late-flowering plants





How to combine structural borders using bold colours

Create focal points

The gentle white stems of ***Gaura lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies' (1)** along with ***Verbena bonariensis* (2)** add lightness to the rich colour of ***Hylotelephium* 'Herbstfreude' (3)**. But it's the vibrant autumn colour of ***Euonymus europaeus* 'Red Cascade' (4)** that creates the focal point for this border. Seedheads of ***Monarda menthifolia* (5)** mirror the *Verbena's* height on the other side of the path, while ***Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' (6)** echoes the gaura and creates a lighter tone.

Plant grasses

Jan has used a wide selection of grasses in this area by the house, from the tall, straight ***Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Overdam' (1)** and gently arching ***Schizachyrium scoparium* 'Jan's Wildwest' (2)** to the light and airy ***Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Tardiflora'(3)** and fluffy ***Pennisetum orientale* (4)**. However, these are really just the supporting cast as it is the golden, arching, flower heads of ***Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' (5)**, which doesn't self-seed or collapse, that takes centre stage.

Include late-flowering plants

Incredibly floriferous, and flowering well into November, ***Symphyotrichum laeve* 'Anneke Van der Jeugd' (1)** is the dominant plant in this group. It is a selection of Jan's and named after his wife. Here it mingles well with other asters, while grasses, such as ***Panicum virgatum* 'Northwind' (2)** and the strongly upright ***Sorghastrum nutans* 'Indian Steel' (3)**, provide contrast.

Use layers

This area of planting displays a layered approach, with low-growing plants, such as ***Geranium sanguineum* 'Apfelblüte' (1)** and the yellow autumn foliage of ***Amsonia* 'Blue Ice' (2)**, edging the path. The centre of the bed is punctuated by bursts of strong colour from the likes of ***Symphyotrichum novi-belgii* 'Schöne von Dietlikon' (3)** while the showy grasses ***Pennisetum orientale* 'Tall Tails' (4)** and the strongly vertical ***Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora*'Overdam' (5)** add a further layer of interest.

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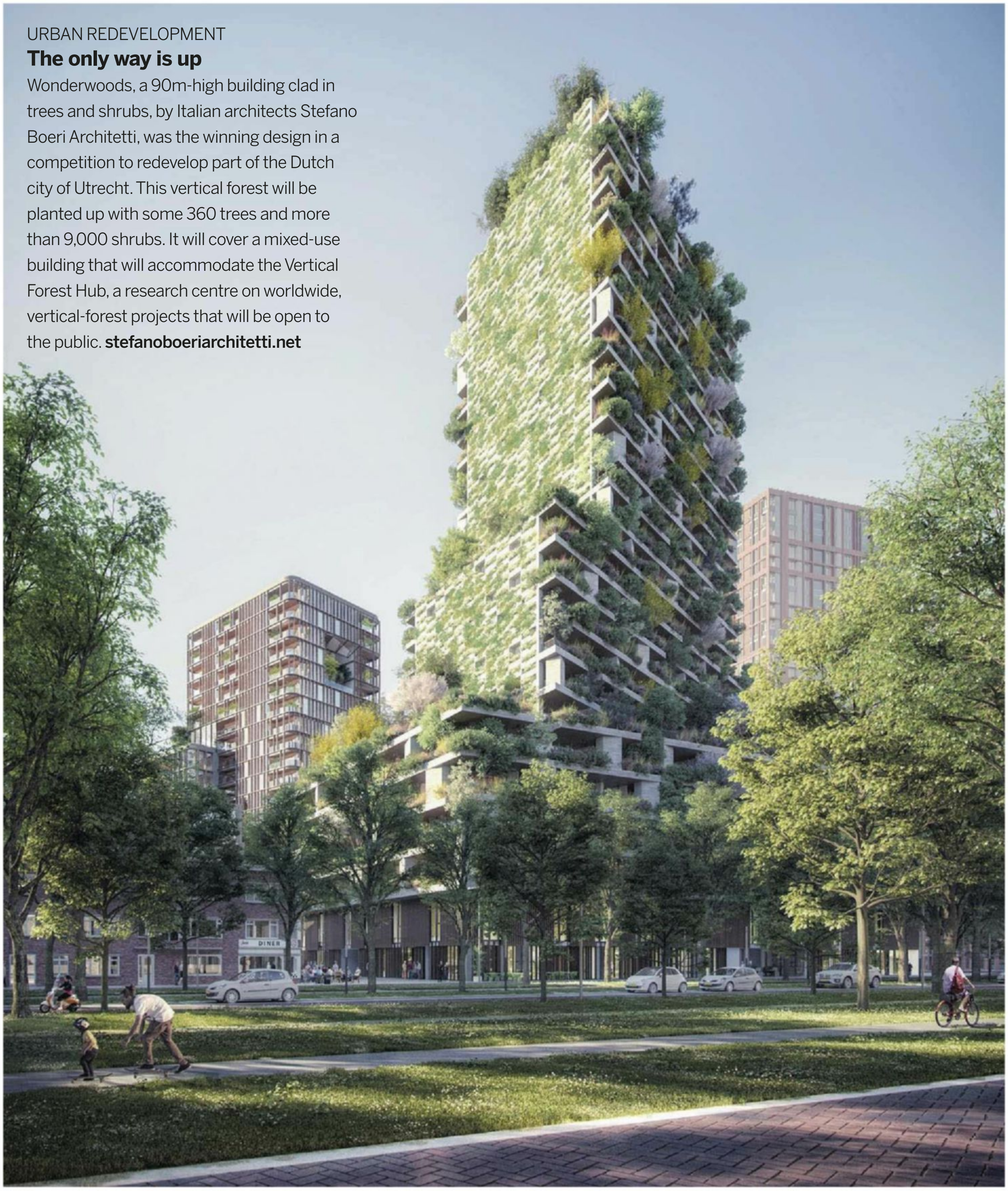
UPDATE COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

The only way is up

Wonderwoods, a 90m-high building clad in trees and shrubs, by Italian architects Stefano Boeri Architetti, was the winning design in a competition to redevelop part of the Dutch city of Utrecht. This vertical forest will be planted up with some 360 trees and more than 9,000 shrubs. It will cover a mixed-use building that will accommodate the Vertical Forest Hub, a research centre on worldwide, vertical-forest projects that will be open to the public. **stefanoboeriarchitetti.net**

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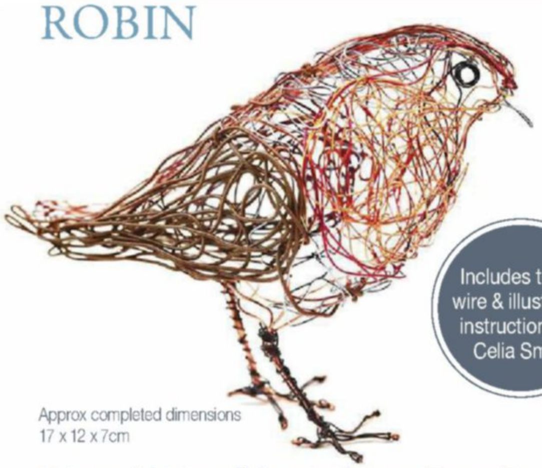

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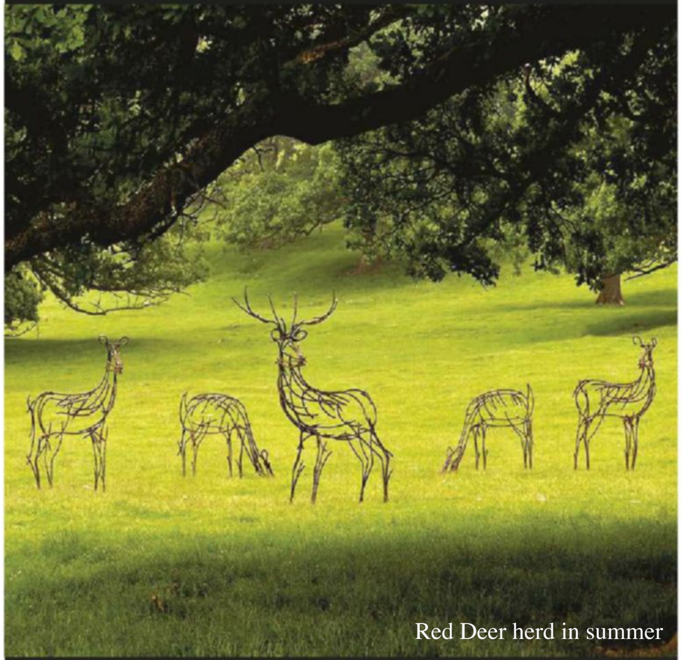

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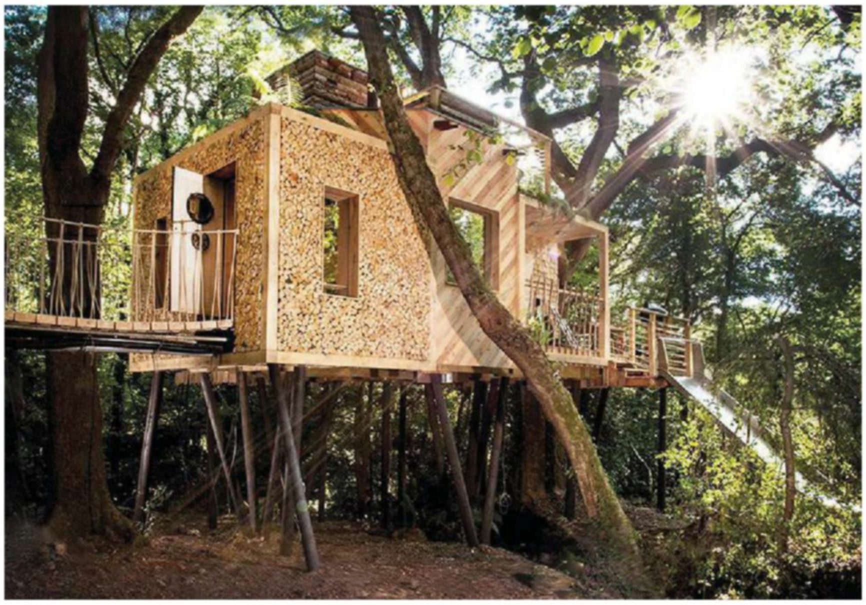
COMMUNITY SPACE

Quiet corner

Perfumier Jo Malone and homelessness charity St Mungo's have partnered to transform a disused corner of a park in London's Notting Hill into a richly scented community space. The Quiet Garden is the latest in a series of collaborative gardens created by the fragrance house and charity that aim to shine a light on mental health issues among the homeless community. Designed by herb specialist Jekka McVicar, this one has been planted with restful blues, purples and greens by trainee and volunteer gardeners as part of St Mungo's Putting Down Roots project that helps its clients to reconnect and learn new skills. The garden is made up of two circular spaces – a herb garden and a restful space – that you enter through an arch entwined with scented roses.



RIBA AWARD

Night in the woods

A wooden treehouse that wraps around a mature oak in a Dorset woodland has won the RIBA South West Small Project of the Year 2017. Designed by Bridport architects Brownlie Ernst and Marks, the Woodman's Treehouse is a glamping guesthouse you approach via a raised timber walkway and oak block ribbon bridge that leads to the charred-oak front door. The building is clad in timber inside and out with a rotunda-shaped living quarters that is housed within the the rectilinear outer casing.

mallinson.co.uk

NEW GARDEN

Imaginative play

The Zoflora and Caudwell Children's Wild Garden, which won Best Show at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show, is being rebuilt at Keele University for the opening next month of the Caudwell International Children's Centre. Play space specialists Adam White and Andrée Davies have created an imaginative and therapeutic garden for children with disabilities, particularly autism, that incorporates grassy mounds, tree houses, a spinning boulder, a hollowed-out log and a tranquil woodland area.

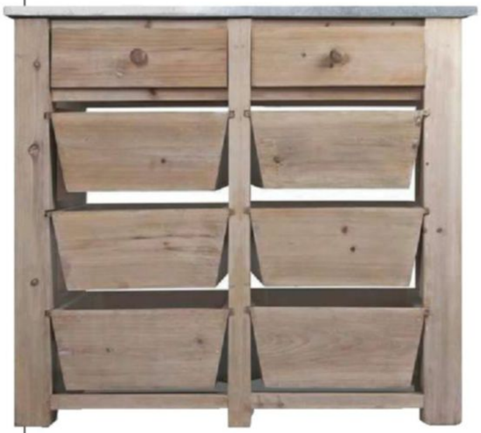
caudwellchildren.com

JASON INGRAM, SANDY STEELE-PERKINS, NICK HARRISON

PUBLIC PARK

Space from the city

A new public park, which is set to be one of the largest public spaces to be created in greater London in more than a century, has been given the green light. The landscape masterplan by London practice Carmody Groarke transforms 110 acres of disused farmland close to Heathrow Airport into an undulating green space. The southern half will feature open parkland and meadows while the northern section will incorporate children's play areas, sports pitches, cricket nets, football goals, tennis courts, a landscaped amphitheatre and a running track. Work is due to start in 2019. **rectory-farm.com**



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NEW GARDEN

Palace of the senses

A new public garden will open next year at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. Inspired by the Palace's 17th-century physic garden, the new garden has been designed by landscape architects J&L Gibbons, and will be laid out geometrically in raised beds and planted year-round with native and exotic medicinal plants that would have been grown in the 17th century. The original physic garden was the first of its kind in Scotland, and only the second botanic garden to be established in Britain. **royalcollection.org.uk**

Notebook

- A crowdfunding campaign has been set up to raise money to reclaim land that was once part of **Sayes Court**. This now neglected park in Deptford, southeast London, was originally established by the famous gardener and diarist John Evelyn. spacehive.com/sayes-court
- Experience the sound of silence in the beautiful settings of Croome Court, Worcestershire – the first large-scale commission for 'Capability' Brown – which is taking part in the **Silent Space** project to encourage people to switch off their phones, stop talking and enjoy the natural world. Sundays, until 15 October, 10am-5pm, £7.25. nationaltrust.org.uk
- See the work of eight **West Country artists**, including willow sculptor Katherine Miles, in the woodland setting of Stone Lane Gardens, Devon. Until 31 October, 10am-6pm. stonelanegardens.com
- Develop your design skills on a new short course, **Designing Your Own Personal Garden**, aimed at amateur gardeners. The course, run by London College of Garden Design and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, takes place over four days at Kew. 11 & 18 October, and 8 & 15 November, 10.30am-4.30pm, £480. Tel 020 8332 5641, kew.org
- Landscape architects J&L Gibbons is hosting three evening events at the Garden Museum. The talks will bring together speakers from diverse disciplines to discuss **Autumn Colour, Liquid Assets** and **Taking Care**. 11, 18 & 25 October, 5.30-7.30pm, £30. gardenmuseum.org.uk
- Book now for the **SGD Autumn Conference** at Royal Geographical Society, London, on the theme of Water Ways. Speakers include Tom Stuart-Smith, Andrew Ewing, and Mette Skjold of Danish design practice SLA. 18 November, 9.50am-5.15pm, £104. sgd.org.uk

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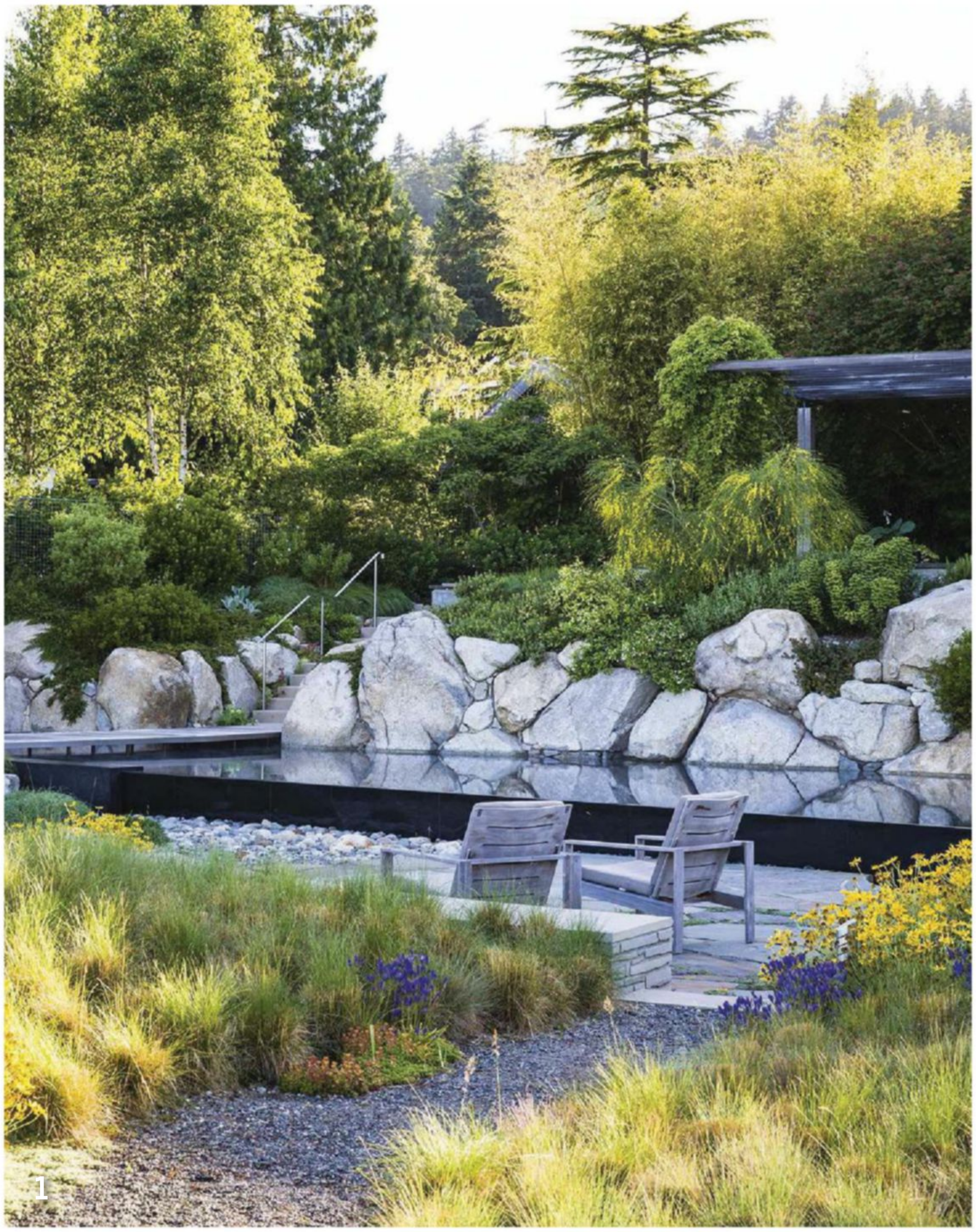
1 Stonewalling

If your garden needs a retaining wall, then why not forget dinky brickwork and railway sleepers, and go with large rocks instead? The main caveat is that it works best where you are surrounded by crags and mountains – as here in this Paul Broadhurst-designed garden on the shores of Lake Washington – and is not quite as effective in Surrey. You also need to make sure that you employ the services of a very good stonemason.



1 CLAIRE TAKACS, DESIGN: PAUL BROADHURST

James Alexander-Sinclair is a garden designer, writer, broadcaster and founder of into-gardens.com. He has served on the RHS Council for the past five years.

Rock revival

From a perfectly executed slice of landscape to the contrast between big rocks and small alpine plants, James Alexander-Sinclair delights in rockeries

WORDS JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR

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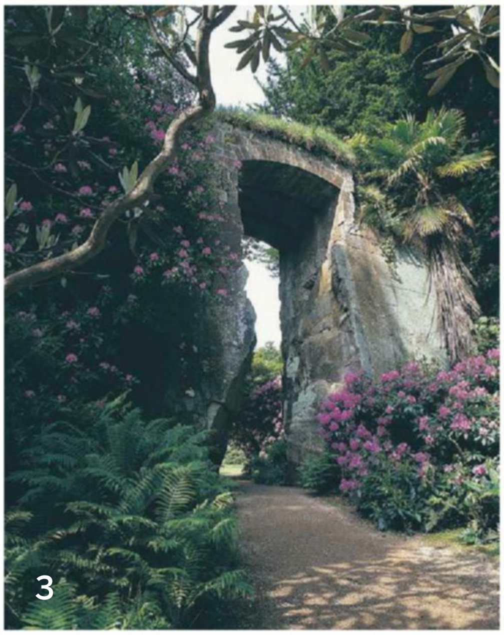
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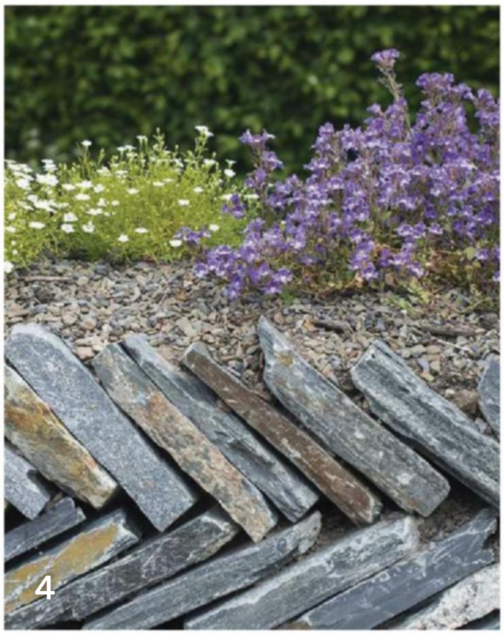
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2 MARIANNE MAJERUS; 3 GRAEME PEACOCK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 4 TIM GAINEY / GAP PHOTOS

2 Dry stone

For those lucky enough to live near the Mediterranean (or other similarly sunny and dry parts of the world) then this arrangement of succulents, agaves and cactus will work well. However, those of us in damp Britain need not give up as you will get an equally alluring effect with ferns (if in shade) or, obviously, alpine plants.

3 Rock of ages

Here are some very large rocks beautifully planted with everything from rhododendrons to alpines. Admittedly, they had the advantage of not having to actually shift too many rocks as this is the famous Quarry Garden at Belsay Hall in Northumberland. Eleven acres of garden built in the quarry from which the stone for the house was chiselled.

4 High and dry

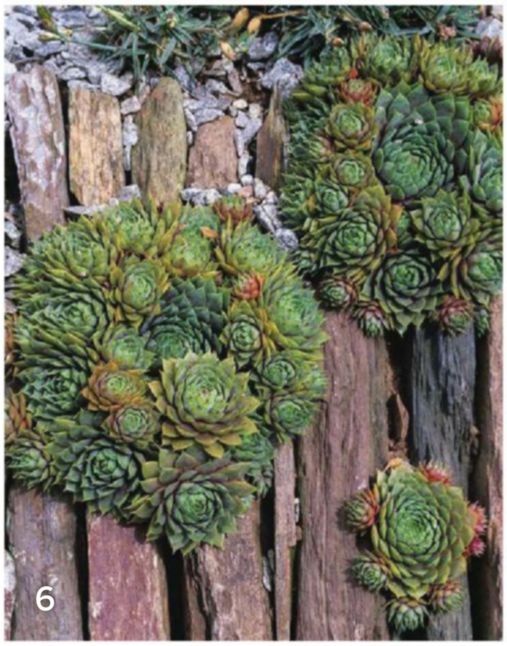
A good example of what most alpine plants love – good sharp drainage. Wet and soggy feet is a sure way to kill them off and nobody wants that on their conscience – least of all the good folk here at RHS Rosemoor. This is *Silene pusilla* and *Chaenorhinum origanifolium* 'Blue Dream'.

If one had to think of the horticultural equivalent of the flared loon pant then it would probably be the rockery – if you have no idea what I am talking about then damn you for being so young and full of promise. Gardening, like life, is susceptible to the swaying vagaries of fashion and nothing has fallen so far as the rockery. Time was when every suburban garden had a pile of old stones in which alpines were cosseted and where, occasionally, gnomes cavorted as a homage to the mountains. Often this was just a way of getting rid of some inconvenient stones and the creations had a tendency to look like pet graveyards. Today, outside the gardens of enthusiasts, the alpine garden has been rather forgotten and dwarfed by the excitements of naturalistic borders and jaunty topiary.

Even a century ago the idea of rock gardens was not new – as in so many things the Chinese and Japanese had thought of it many centuries earlier. Not only thought of it but refined the idea to the nth degree with serenely spiritual arrangements of rock, gravel and plants. We Europeans were Johnny Come Latelies who did not really get on the bandwagon until the late 18th century. People returning from cultural escapades flitting from museum to monastery and from catacomb to caliphate wanted something to remind them of their travels. They had no holiday snaps so had to find something else be it sculptures, paintings or, as in this case, plants. Intrepid (or simply rich) travellers trundled round Europe picking up souvenirs and bringing them back to impress their friends and tenantry. These then had to be displayed in a suitably dignified fashion – hence the necessity of a rockery. There were two schools of thought – those who used rocks in an artistic fashion to display specimens or create grottoes and those (like Humphry Repton) who recreated ▷

5 Northern rock

Time was when RHS Chelsea Flower Show was full of rock gardens (and rhododendrons) but they had been in short supply until Dan Pearson recreated part of the magnificent Chatsworth Trout Stream in 2015 (for Laurent-Perrier). Three hundred tonnes of prime Derbyshire rock were shipped down to London to create one of the finest show gardens of recent times.



6 Vertical challenge

This is a crevice garden with thin stones stacked vertically leaving little gaps for plants to colonise. Doesn't need a lot of space and can be exquisite but you do need to think a bit about geology and rocks. A load of old leftover tiles doth not the mustard cut.

7 Hard choices

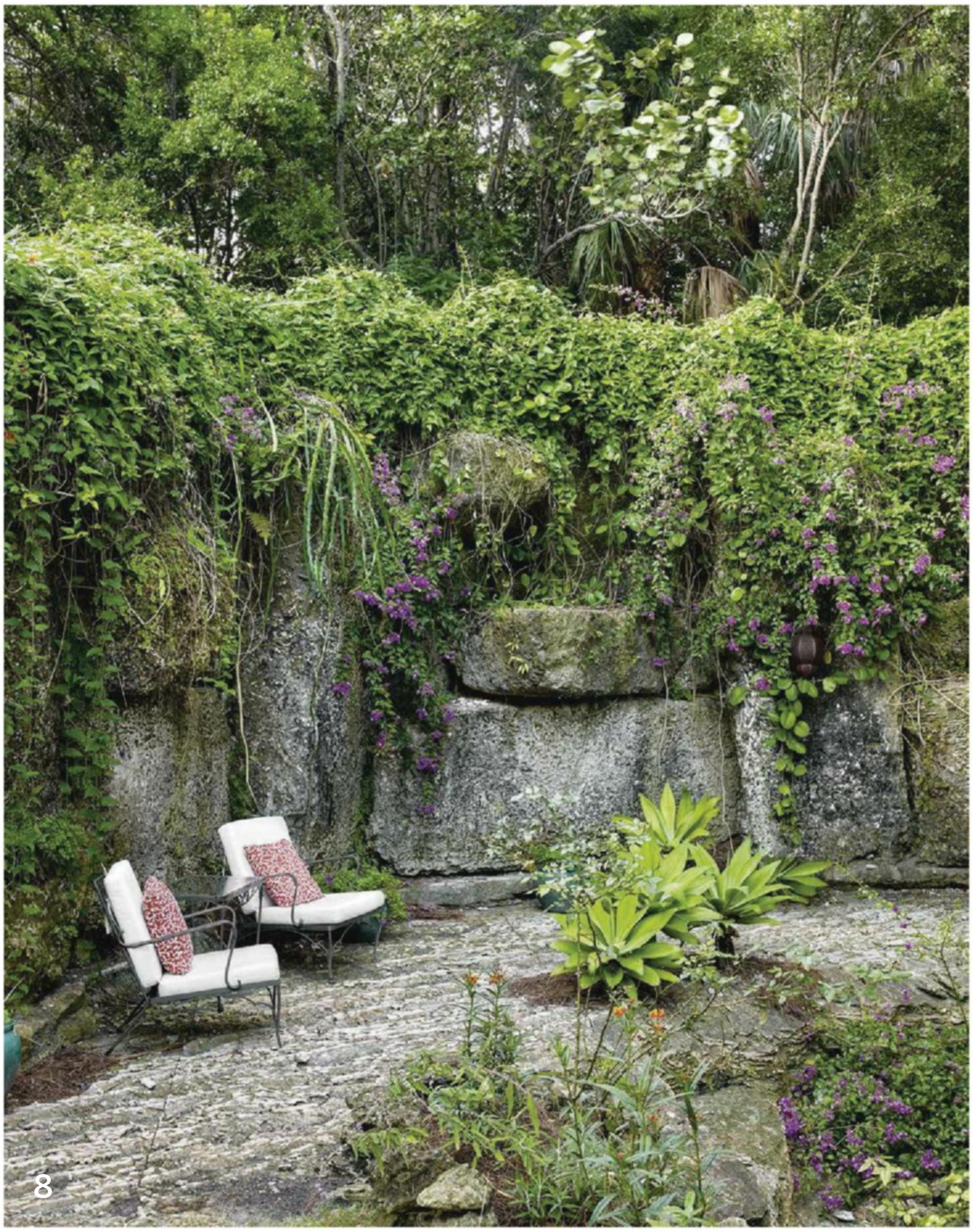
Many alpine plants are obligingly happy in pots and containers – most alpine houses have a rotating display of potted plants that are whisked in and out as they reach their crescendoes. Unless you have limitless space, choose plants that look good most of the time rather than ones that spend 51 weeks of the year looking bored.

5 MARIANNE MAJERUS, THE LAURENT-PERRIER CHATSWORTH GARDEN, RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW 2015 / DESIGN: DAN PEARSON; 6 NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; 7 LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS.

▷ naturalistic rockscapes. As time went on these became more extravagant: possibly the apogee of this was the representation of the Matterhorn commissioned by Sir Frank Crisp to adorn his garden at Friar Park in Oxfordshire – later the home of George Harrison who, with his wife Olivia, restored the gardens – and the alpine collection.

Because, being gardeners, all this kerfuffle with rocks served a single purpose: to display plants. An edelweiss or an antennaria can look a bit lost in a border or under a shrubbery. These are plants that thrive on rocky screes or wedged into granite crevices so, basing it on the very sensible maxim of right plant, right place, they tried to recreate their natural habitats. I think this is a good moment for a confession: I once considered alpine plants fussy and annoying. I have even compared alpine enthusiasts to anoraked train spotters. My only excuse is that these were the senseless drivellings of a callow youth who had yet to fully appreciate the glories of the *Gentian* or the subtle charms of the *Globularia*. Nowadays I find a visit to RHS Wisley incomplete without paying a call to the alpine house. If I might wheel out a slightly jaded cliché – they are like small jewels on the diadem of an empress.

So how can we get some rockery love back into our gardens? Most importantly we must avoid the pile of spoil adorned with broken paving slabs like a streetfighter's teeth. I reckon there are three ways to do this. First there is the vignette approach where you can reproduce a modestly sized, but perfectly executed, piece of landscape: think small but delicate. I was in Vancouver Island recently and there was an exquisite crevice garden, nothing grand but with rocks laid to properly imitate the geological folds of a mountainside and, set in the crevices, a divine selection of alpine



8 MARION BRENNER

8 Hidden gem

This garden just shows what you can do with a load of diggers, a bagful of imagination and a bit of drive. This is the Hammock Garden (designed by Raymond Jungles) in Florida, which is a wonderful mixture of the natural (the pond is actually the water table) and unnatural having been dug out and reinforced by lumps of limestone the size of a well-formed moose. It is called Hammock not because it is perfect for a siesta (although it is) but after the nearby, Matheson Hammock Park.

Further reading

- ***The English Rock-Garden*** by Reginald Farrer (London, Jack, 1919). Farrer wrote several books at the height of the rock garden craze. Some – including the above – have been reprinted but ransack a second-hand book shop for others.
- ***Alpines*** by Christopher Grey-Wilson (Southwater, 2015).
- ***Rock Gardening*** byJoseph Tychonievich (Timber Press, 2016).

- The Alpine Garden Society will tell you everything you want to know. **alpinegardensociety.net**

plants each one displayed perfectly and thriving in poor soil and good drainage. This is difficult to do properly requiring not just botany but a bit of geological know-how.

The second option is to go for the David and Goliath effect – small plants and big rocks. This is the equivalent of importing your own mountain and the contrast can be extraordinarily effective: flowers that look so delicate and vulnerable are nothing of the kind and can thrive in inhospitable crannies while being battered by gale-force winds. Finally, you could do the whole thing in containers – ranging from tufa-covered troughs to gravel-mulched terracotta. This is probably the best solution for those of us with limited space.

Whatever your choices, whatever your taste, there are alpine plants ranging from bulbs to shrubs so there is no excuse. Invest in boulders, grow alpines and let us once more rock the rockery. ☐

Gardens to visit

- **Compton Acres**, 164 Canford Cliffs Road, Poole, Dorset BH13 7ES. Tel 01202 700778, comptonacres.co.uk
- **Cragside**, Rothbury, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 7PX. Tel 01669 620333, nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside
- **Exbury Gardens**, Exbury, Southampton, Hampshire SO45 1AZ. Tel 023 8089 1203, exbury.co.uk
- **Mount Stuart**, Isle of Bute PA20 9LR. Tel 01700 503877, mountstuart.com
- **Ness Botanic Gardens**, University of Liverpool, Neston Road, Little Neston, Ness, Cheshire CH64 4AY. Tel 0151 795 6300, nessgardens.org.uk
- All the **RHS gardens** have good alpine collections. Wisley in particular has a handsome rockery. rhs.org.uk/gardens

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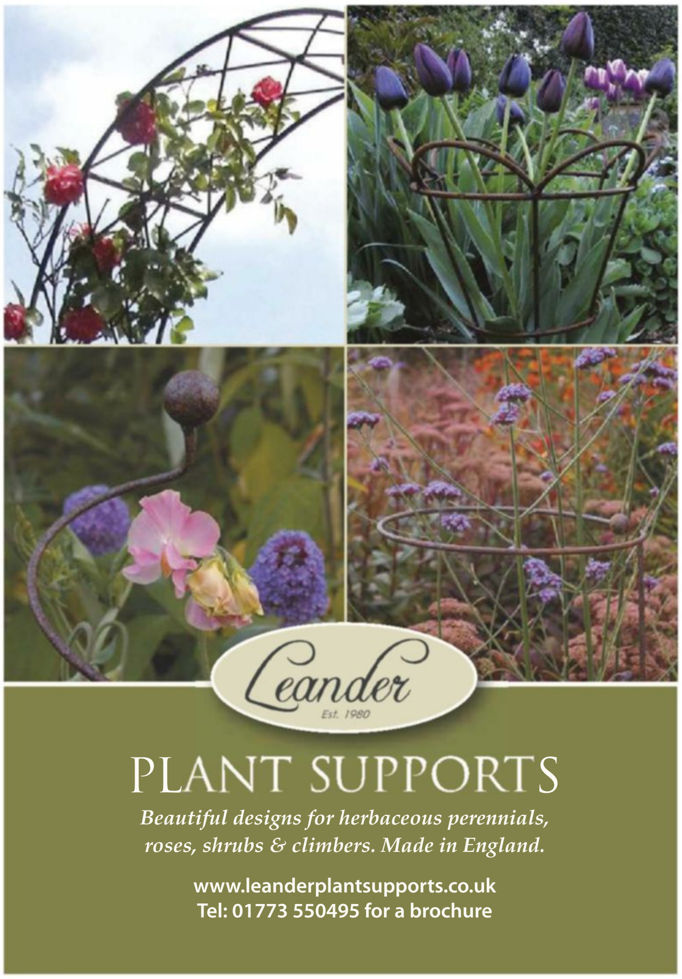
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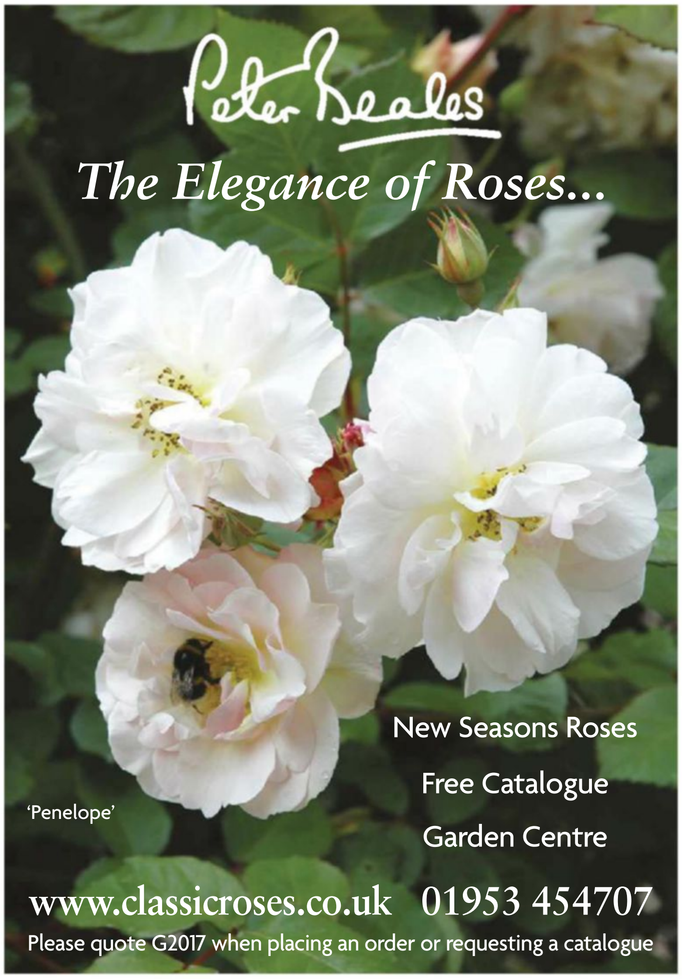
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Downtools

Book reviews, crossword, back issues, reader offers

Discover the inspiring story of Paul Pulford, the man behind the rooftop garden at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, in *Head Gardeners* by Ambra Edwards, reviewed on page 97.

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Charlotte strikes back

Seven-year-old, beats massive strokes – that's something to sing about!

Being young and healthy is no protection against stroke, as Charlotte and her mother Leila discovered. Charlotte was hit by a major stroke in the middle of the night and was rushed to the hospital. She remained in a coma for two days and suffered more massive strokes. When she came round she couldn't speak, move or even blink. The doctors prepared Leila for the worst.

But Leila didn't give up. While she was singing to her daughter, Charlotte struck back and smiled. Within two weeks she was speaking. Three years on, she is running and playing again. 'It's a miracle to have Charlotte with us' Leila says.

Charlotte's incredible recovery was helped by the huge advances in stroke research we funded, which has completely changed the way stroke is treated. But with only a tenth of the funding given to cancer research, there's so much more to do.

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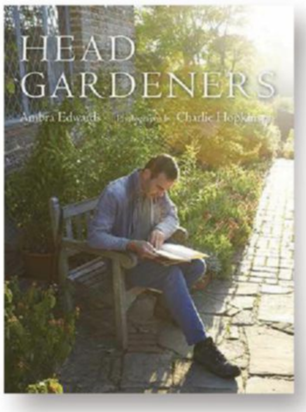
Book reviews



HEAD GARDENERS

by Ambra Edwards,
photographs by
Charlie Hopkinson
Pimpernel Press, £35

ISBN 978-191258743

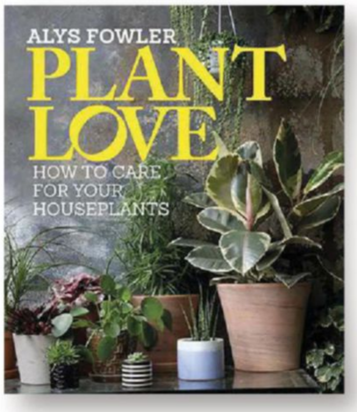
The personal stories of the unsung horticultural heroes who shape, run and care for some of Britain's most iconic gardens.

Reviewer Caroline Beck is a flower grower and garden writer.

I've always been jealous of head gardeners, while also being relieved I don't have their job; even if they've clinched their position on the basis of their horticultural skill, they are likely to end up mired in a portfolio of roles from project manager, to events co-ordinator and PR guru.

In her new book, multi-award-winning writer Ambra Edwards has profiled 14 head gardeners across Britain, managing places as distinct as cloistered Oxford colleges to the heavily trampled lawns of hallowed public gardens. What unites them is their vigour and vision for the task, even though most spend more time managing staff and budgets than getting their hands dirty, a fact that many lament. Some are well known – such as Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter and Troy Scott Smith at Sissinghurst – but Edwards is so skilled at unearthing the often conflicting passions of her subjects you feel as though you're eavesdropping on an intimate conversation, illuminating person and place. I enjoyed getting acquainted with less well-known figures, such as Paul Pulford (of the rooftop garden at Queen Elizabeth Hall, London), whose gardening career was undoubtedly the making of him, and Swiss-born Beatrice Krehl (formerly of Waltham Place in Berkshire), who regards British gardening as barbaric, urging us to 'garden like a cow' (you'll have to read the book to find out what this means, but it's changed my approach to weeding).

Charlie Hopkinson's eloquent photographs capture the essence of their subjects, not in a public-facing pose, but in a detail of their working day, such as a flapping jacket or muddy boot. The book is also a covert plea for investment in gardeners at all levels, because if we're to maintain the gardens we value, we need to value those who maintain them.



PLANT LOVE: HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR HOUSEPLANTS

by Alys Fowler
Kyle Books, £18.99

ISBN 978-0857833815

Converts to the indoor plant trend as well as seasoned houseplant growers will find both inspiration and information.

Reviewer Jane Perrone is a garden writer and podcaster.

Houseplants are cool; I never thought I would write those words. I was once a geeky teenager with a bedroom full of peperomias and palms, but now the plants I have long treasured are everywhere.

Fowler's love for houseplants is genuine, as is her candour about the difficulties of getting them to thrive. Few other writers would be brave enough to begin an introduction with these words: 'Let it be said, clearly and simply, your plants do not want to live with you.'

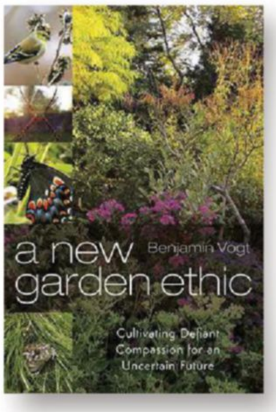
The opening chapters explain each plant's native habitat as an aid to keeping them alive indoors. I doubt you'll read about Crassulacean acid metabolism in many other mainstream books about houseplants, but knowing that cacti use this method to photosynthesise offers an insight into why they crave the sunny conditions that would kill many other plants.

Fowler also addresses an environmental issue that few writers in this field bother to cover, namely that the houseplant industry lags behind the rest of horticulture when it comes to use of peat and systemic pesticides. This serves as a timely warning to source plants carefully.

There is an extensive and helpful section of plant profiles, arranged according to light requirements, from sun to shade. The accompanying photographs avoid the usual clichés of the modern houseplant book, where plants are artfully but thoughtlessly shoved in the wrong pots. Simon Wheeler's beautiful photographs have a homely feel, showing houseplants in settings that readers could realistically recreate.

Whether you are looking to start a collection, or trying to work out what killed your favourite fern, this is a rich and rewarding read.

Book reviews



A NEW GARDEN ETHIC

by Benjamin Vogt
New Society Publishers, £13.99

ISBN 978-0865718555

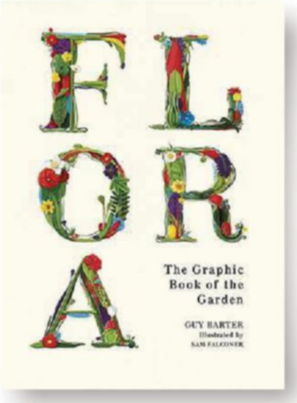
A passionate and eloquent, if one-sided, exploration of the ethical case for native plants and its philosophical implications.

Reviewer Noel Kingsbury is a plantsman and garden writer.

Ethics is rarely openly discussed in garden circles, but lies just beneath the surface in all expressions of concern over pollinators, the use of peat in potting composts, garden chemicals and so on. This book promises much, but focuses almost wholly on one issue: it is a restatement of what has become known as 'nativism', the belief that gardens and designed landscapes should be entirely or overwhelmingly planted with locally native plant species. The author argues that reconnecting our gardens with nature involves planting species that have 'co-evolved' with the natural environment, that only natives can support the web of life that human civilisation has done so much to destroy. Underlying the discussion is a belief in deep ecology, the idea that the human species has no more intrinsic rights than any other.

This book joins a vigorous debate that is largely a North American one, and one where scientific backing can be called on to support different conclusions. The issues in Europe are different, there being little real evidence for justifying native-only planting. Besides, we have a more uncomfortable history – the promotion of native plants was part of Nazi landscape policy. Ecologists are increasingly talking about 'novel ecosystems', of which our gardens can be a very good example, composed of species of many different origins, but with a rich ecological functioning, an extension of the idea that natural ecosystems themselves are very accidental in nature.

Sadly, however, this idea is more or less dismissed. In these politically fevered times, an attempt to address some of the more contentious implications of 'nativism' might have added to this otherwise spirited and well-argued defence.



FLORA

by Guy Barter,
illustrations by Sam Falconer
Arum Press, £25

ISBN 978-1781316047

A book of wide-ranging and solid horticultural advice for beginners, backed up by lavish and colourful illustrations.

Reviewer Lia Leendertz is a garden writer and blogger.

New gardeners must be the most prolific buyers of gardening books, as there seem to be endless and varied attempts at attracting and educating them. *Flora* is a book that covers the basics for those new to the game, and does it well. First things first, though: this book is not a 'flora' in any traditional sense. It does not belong with the grand tomes that fall under this name in the RHS Lindley Library, that list and chart the plant species of Greece, Java or Brazil. Here we can presume that 'flora' has been chosen simply as an appealing title that will look beautiful on the cover and will lure in the curious, and in that it certainly succeeds.

The book is written by long-time RHS chief horticultural adviser Guy Barter, who also runs the RHS members' advisory service, so we know that the calibre of the advice within will be top notch. And indeed it is, covering every possible aspect of gardening carefully and methodically. It shows you how to do everything you could think of in your garden from bee-friendly planting to making new plants from cuttings, checking soil pH and choosing ornamental grasses.

The book's gimmick, if it is fair to call it that, is that it is beautiful: it has been lavishly, imaginatively and generously illustrated by Sam Falconer, who covers every page in colour and life. This has the effect of drawing the reader into the page and of holding interest. The illustrations bring to life elements of gardening that might otherwise be considered dull and help explain complicated topics in a simple, visual way. The breadth of focus of this book does mean that each topic is dealt with fairly briefly, but it will capture the interest of a beginner. It makes a beautiful and reliable starting point.

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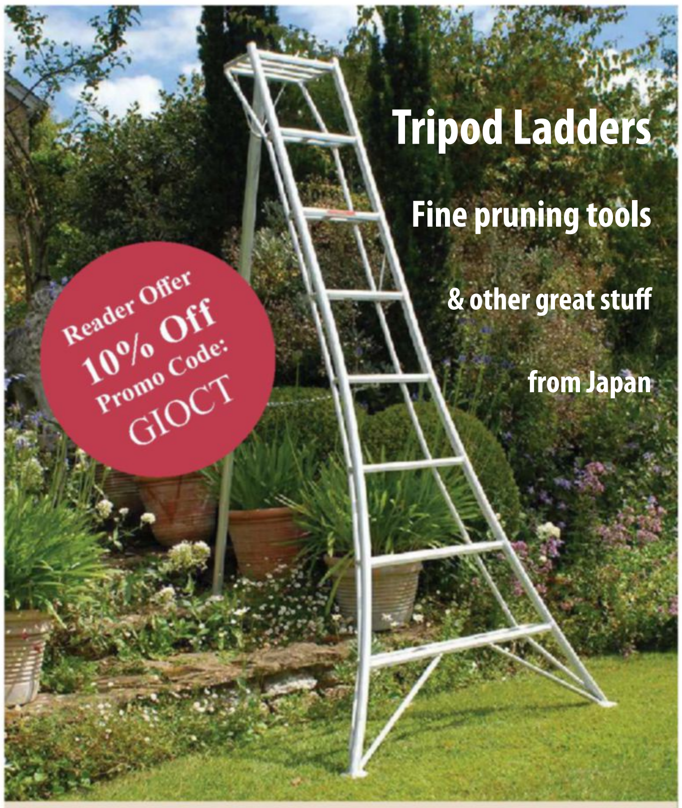
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Autumn GARDEN PLANNER

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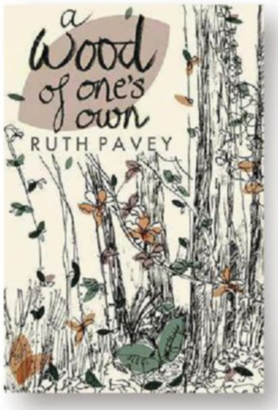


A WOOD OF ONE'S OWN
by Ruth Pavey
Duckworth Overlook, £14.99

ISBN 978-0715652237

A charming account of a forgotten wood, loved, restored (through trial and error), and now fondly remembered.

Reviewer Alys Fowler is a garden writer and horticulturist.

As someone who has a permanent search on Rightmove for that little piece of land where I might plant some trees, this book resonated from the very first page, with its charmingly drawn map of Pavey's wood. There is a spot for the best snowdrops and a clearing for the author's Rollalong metal cabin among the various plantings.

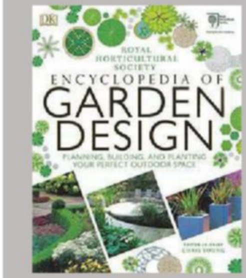
The premise is simple: Pavey longs to own a bit of land to plant trees. Somerset has familial ties, and she sets off to try to buy an orchard at an auction. Failing to do this, she buys on impulse four acres of scrubby amenity woodland that no one wants for the princely sum of just under £3,000 (don't get too excited – it was the late 1990s).

The book succeeds brilliantly because the author makes no bones about the fact that she doesn't know what's she's doing. Trees get stripped, brambles grow back, a dream for a swathe of gentle woodland grass is thwarted by creeping thistles, and unsuitable species give up the ghost as they struggle in the damp soils of the wrong spot. But none of this fazes Pavey, who affably goes about each dilemma with such good heart that you are willing her along on her journey. She purchases a mower she doesn't like, considers a chainsaw, masters a strimmer, sleeps alone in the woods with an axe for protection, goes on midnight wanderings, startles llamas and makes many good friends along the way.

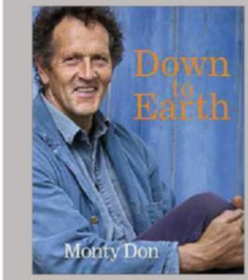
She makes many a rookie error on woodland management and you learn an awful lot from her mistakes. This book may infuriate conservationists and professionals, but I loved it because the author makes so doable the desire to own a wood and care for it. A must-read for anyone who dreams of owning a little wild patch in the countryside and leaving a legacy of trees to future generations. □

Other books

Five new titles for practical gardening advice, design ideas, natural remedies and Japanese garden history.



RHS ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GARDEN DESIGN
editor in chief Chris Young
Dorling Kindersley, £30
ISBN 978-0241286135
Fully revised and revisited, this new edition is a useful companion for garden design.



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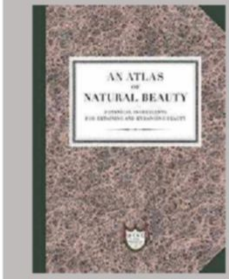
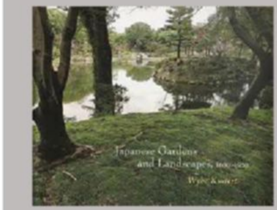


AN ATLAS OF NATURAL BEAUTY
by Victoire de Taillac and Ramdane Touhami
Ebury Press, £20
ISBN 978-1785034947
A practical guide to nature-based beauty treatments.



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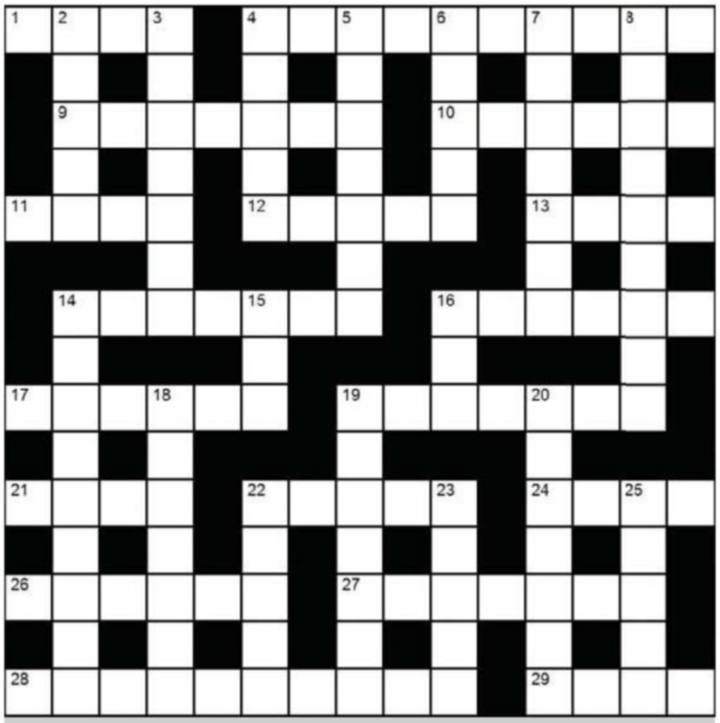


ACROSS

1 Rosemary or Melissa, say, seen near the kitchen? (4)

4 Genus of shrubs in the witch-hazel family, Roy clips so wildly (10)

9 A cultivar of *Pennisetum alopecuroides* – or carrot-top? (3,4)

10 *Gladiolus* with white, pink-edged flowers – variety of 'hep cos'! (6)

11 Genus of shrubs with cream pendant flowers – partly white anthers (4)

12 Sort of position liked by eg *Pulmonaria* (5)

13 Part of carrot seedling decomposes (4)

14 'Smoke bush' genus – fantastic suction (7)

16 Flavour of curly endive, say – sort of beer! (6)

17 Works hard and puts tree scion in another tree (6)

19 This family of exotic-looking plants has about 900 genera (7)

21 They mar potatoes looks! (4)

22 Daisy-like flower in Anna's terrarium (5)

24 Border needs *Carex* plant (top removed) (4)

26 *Clematis* with purple-white dainty flowers, sort of minute (6)

27 Thick foliage – enclosed by gazebo's cagework (7)

28 Confused *Erica* 'Paris' for knotweed genus (10)

29 A crimson-flushed apple's the height of perfection! (4)

DOWN

2 Regretfully hides a white dwarf rhododendron (5)

3 Don't ban unusual NT gardens in north Wales (7)

4 Edible plant associated with garden, land or water (5)

5 Some bred capsicums for florid dwarf delphiniums (7)

6 Floribunda rose with lilac-pink blooms – fortunate! (5)

7 White-flowering *Rhodanthe* (formerly *Helipterum*) I report damaged (7)

8 Genus of busy lizzie (9)

14 The 'cabbage palm' genus Rod nicely re-arranged (9)

15 Charity for which private gardens open (3)

16 Broadcaster of broad bean 'Coles' initially (3)

18 Shade/drought-tolerant grasses, genus *Festuca* (7)

19 Time of Apple Day celebration (7)

20 Japanese art of arranging flowers – twisted in a beak (7)

22 Bushy pelargonium with splotched red flowers, native of Mexico once (5)

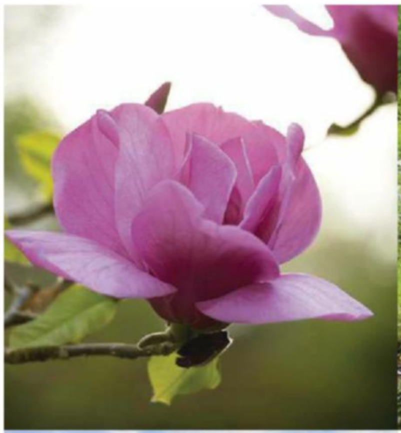
23 Pink hollyhock species – classic cottage garden flower (5)

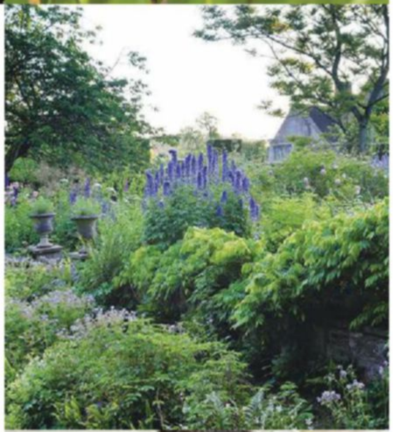
25 Name of striking, yellow auricula in bog, Leamington (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SEPTEMBER'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Dicksonia **6** Dara **8** Tycoon **9** Mottled **10** Wind **11** Ochre **12** Arch **13** Hybrid **15** Jasmine **16** May tree **18** Canopy **20** Anil **21** Scent **23** Spur **24** Tree fern **25** Iberis **26** Thin **27** Sweet flag. **DOWN 1** Daylily **2/19** Cloud pruning **3** Sungold **4** Nymph **5** Anthers **6** Dalmatian **7** Radicle **14** Royal fern **15** Joe **16** Monarch **17** Russets **18** Catmint **22** Ernie **23** Shell.





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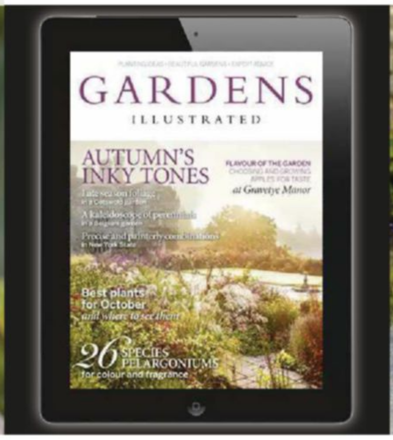
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Reader offers

Species and scented pelargonium collections

If you've read our plant profile on species pelargoniums (see page 52), we're sure you will have been tempted by the gorgeous selection of colourful and delicate blooms. Enjoy your own collection with this series of offers from pelargonium expert Woottens of Wenhaston. As summer draws to a close you can bring your plants indoors to protect them from frost and enjoy them all year round.

Offer

Make your choice from the options shown on the right and below, which include species, scented or a combined collection. Plants are supplied fully established in 9cm pots with detailed care instructions. Prices include p&p.

How to order

- **By phone** 01502 478258, quoting code GIPEL17.
- **Online** woottensplants.com. Click on the Special Offers tab to find these options. Please use the code GIPEL17 when prompted in the 'order notes' box when you come to the checkout stage.
- **By post** Please include details of the collection you would like, your name and address, telephone or email and either a cheque made payable to Woottens of Wenhaston or details of your credit/debit card (including card number, expiry date and security number). Send your order to: Woottens of Wenhaston, The Iris Field, Hall Road, Wenhaston, Suffolk IP19 9HF.

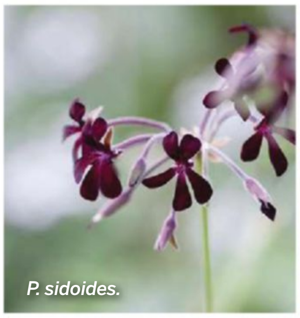
Offer closes 31 October or while stocks last. Offer available to mainland UK only. Email or ring the nursery for EU delivery costs. Varieties may be substituted depending on availability.

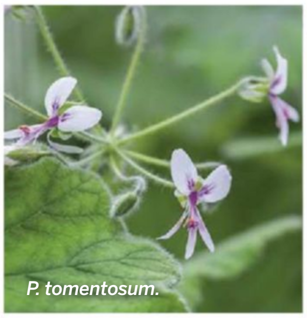
Woottens' choice collection

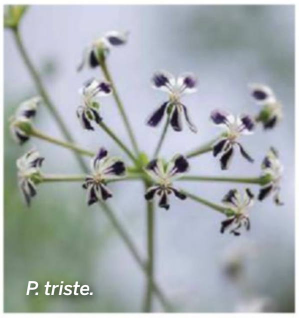
9 x 9cm plants

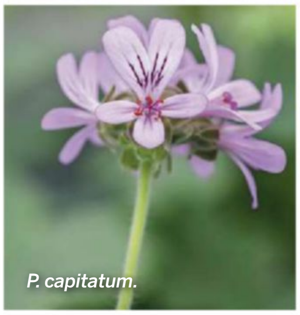
Leave the choice to Woottens' expert nursery growers and they'll select nine of the best species and scented plants for a varied and long-lasting display. You'll make a great saving, too.

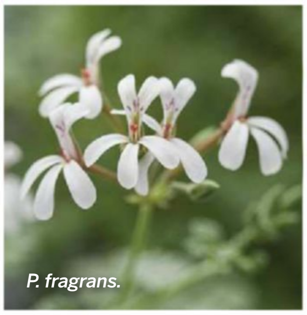
£30
inc p&p

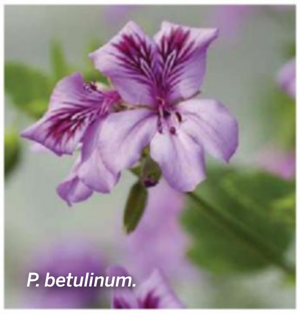

P. sidoides.


P. tomentosum.


P. triste.


P. capitatum.


P. fragrans.


P. betulinum.

Species collection No. 1

3 x 9cm plants

P. sidoides
P. tomentosum
P. triste

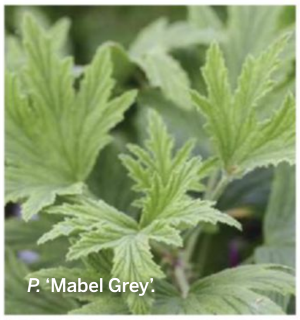
£15
inc p&p

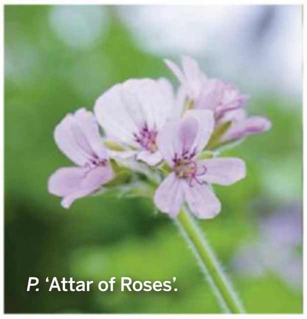
Species collection No. 2

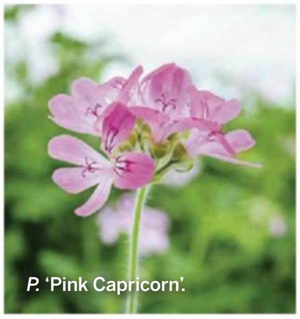
6 x 9cm plants

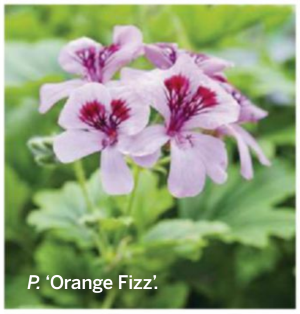
P. sidoides
P. tomentosum
P. triste
P. capitatum
P. fragrans
P. betulinum

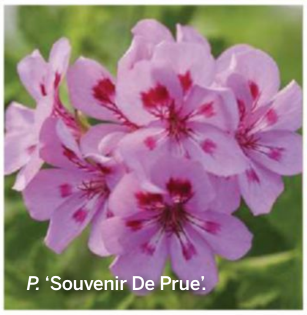
£25
inc p&p

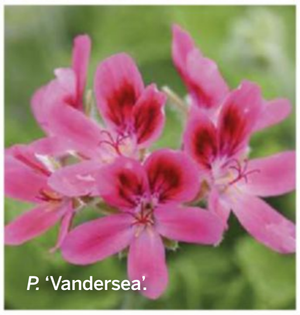

P. 'Mabel Grey'.


P. 'Attar of Roses'.


P. 'Pink Capricorn'.


P. 'Orange Fizz'.


P. 'Souvenir De Prue'.


P. 'Vandersea'.

Scented collection No. 1

3 x 9cm plants

P. 'Mabel Grey'
P. 'Attar of Roses'
P. 'Pink Capricorn'

£15
inc p&p

Scented collection No. 2

6 x 9cm plants

P. 'Mabel Grey'
P. 'Attar of Roses'
P. 'Pink Capricorn'
P. 'Orange Fizz'
P. 'Souvenir De Prue'
P. 'Vandersea'

£25
inc p&p

DIANNA JAZWINSKI, JASON INGRAM

Save 20% on apple trees from Pomona Fruits

One of the best-loved fruits, apples are probably the easiest tree fruits to grow and very popular with gardeners (see our feature on the apples grown at Gravetye Manor on page 70). Garden fruit specialist Pomona Fruits is offering readers a 20 per cent discount on a selection of cultivars.

What to expect Trees supplied are grafted on to M26 semi-dwarfing rootstock, which will produce a tree that is easy to grow and easy to pick. Bush apple trees will grow to 2.4-3.6m in height and spread. Trees are supplied bare-rooted and at 1.2-1.5m high. Choose two different cultivars to ensure adequate pollination. Self-fertile cultivars do not require a pollinator. Triploids will not act as pollinators.

How to order

- **By phone** Call 01255 440410 with your credit or debit card, quoting offer code GL10AP.
- **Online** at pomonafruits.co.uk/GL10AP.
- **By post** Please fill in the order form and post with payment to: Pomona Fruits Ltd, Department GL10AP, Pomona House, 12 Third Avenue, Walton-on-Naze, Essex CO14 8JU.

Postage & packing Please add £7.95 p&p to your total order.

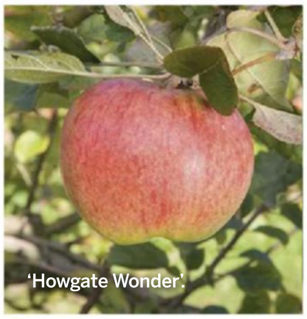
Offer closes 31 December 2017. Available to UK mainland only. Delivery will be from late November/December.

'Blenheim Orange'.

'Discovery'.

'Falstaff'.

'Herefordshire Russet'.


'Howgate Wonder'.

'Red Devil'.

'Blenheim Orange' Offer £16.40 (Triploid). An old favourite. Dessert/culinary apple with large fruits and a distinctive sweet, nutty flavour. When cooked the fruits keep their shape. Resistant to mildew. Suitable for the north. **Season** Oct–Jan.

'Herefordshire Russet' Offer £17.55 (Self-fertile). An excellent new dessert apple combining the aromatic flavour of Cox with a golden russet skin. A favourite in taste trials. Heavy cropping. Can be grown throughout the UK. **Season** Oct–Jan.

'Discovery' AGM* Offer £15.95 (Requires pollinator). The UK's most widely grown, early, dessert apple. Bright scarlet, crisp, juicy fruits. Stores well for an early cultivar. Resistant to scab and mildew. Can be grown throughout UK. **Season** late Aug–Sept.

'Howgate Wonder' AGM Offer £16.40 (Partially self-fertile). Raised in 1915, this is the largest of the cooking apples. The red-striped fruits keep their shape when cooked and have a light, sub-acid flavour. Resistant to mildew. Suitable for the north. **Season** Oct–March.

'Falstaff' Offer £16.40 (Self-fertile). A heavy-cropping, easy-to-grow, dessert apple with red-striped fruits. Crisp and juicy with a refreshing, fruity flavour. Produces a compact tree. Good resistance to late frost. **Season** Oct–Dec.

'Red Devil' Offer £16.40 (Self-fertile). Crisp dessert cultivar with decorative, bright-red fruits and a superb strawberry flavour. The juice is a beautiful pink colour. Resistant to scab and mildew. Suitable for wet areas. **Season** Oct–Nov.

ORDER FORM – PLEASE SEND ORDER & PAYMENT to:
Gardens Illustrated Pomona Fruits Ltd,
Department GL10AP, Pomona House, 12 Third Avenue,
Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex CO14 8JU. Tel 01255 440410

Code	Product Description	Price	Qty	Total
APL021	**Apple 'Blenheim Orange'**	£16.40		£
APL004	**Apple 'Discovery'**	£15.95		£
APL006	**Apple 'Falstaff'**	£16.40		£
APL009	**Apple 'Herefordshire Russet'**	£17.55		£
APL038	**Apple 'Howgate Wonder'**	£16.40		£
APL012	**Apple 'Red Devil'**	£16.40		£
	Please add £7.95 p&p to total order			£7.95
	TOTAL			£

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Address ______________________

______________________ Postcode ______________________

Telephone number ______________________

PAYMENT DETAILS

I enclose a cheque for £_________ made payable to 'Pomona Fruits Ltd' and with my name and address on the back.

Or charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro

Card Number

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Security Number (last 3 digits on signature strip) ☐☐☐

Signature ______________________

* Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

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Autumn Inspiration

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Essential for anyone who goes outside... Waterproof, durable, easy slip-on/off, lightweight garden clogs featuring flora/fauna unique prints. Available for men or women in UK sizes 3-14. Prices from £25 (free delivery).
backdoorshoes.co.uk

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The Garden Trading collection embraces a clean, practical and uncluttered lifestyle. Our Foscot Fire Pits are crafted from a heavy-gauge, raw steel, which when loaded up with logs provide a focal point for cosy evenings or big social gatherings. Browse the full range of furniture, lighting, homeware and accessories online. **gardentrading.co.uk** | **01993 845559**

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over £40.
See Website for details
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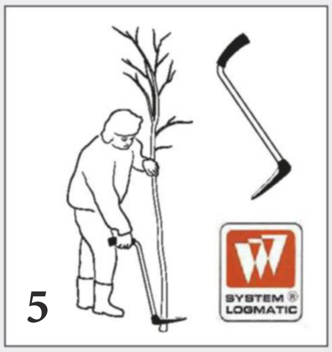

martha hill
martha hill
6

1. ELGAR SHIRTS

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elgarshirts.com | **01422 882346**

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bespokeplantsupports.co.uk | **NE9 5EY**

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Bushmatic is the best manual bush cutter to use to clear bushes/scrub and saplings of up to 4cm diameter. It's efficient, fast and easy to use, and environmentally friendly for the garden and wood.
logmatic.co.uk | **01494 881479**

6. BEAUTY NATURALS

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beautynaturals.com/gard | **0800 980 6665**

Autumn in Colour

This summer, make time to visit this collection of stunning gardens and arboretums across the UK

1 WOBURN ABBEY AND GARDENS

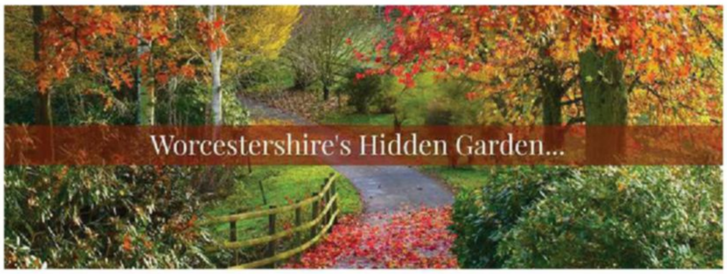
Visit these award-winning gardens as they erupt in an array of stunning autumn colours. There's autumn interest throughout the parkland and gardens but the Bog Garden steals the show. Start your visit with a drive through the extensive deer park, during the season when deer wear their spectacular antlers with pride.

Web **www.woburnabbey.co.uk**
Address **Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9WA**

2 THE LAKELAND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Overlooking Windermere, with stunning views across the lake to the Lakeland fells beyond, Holehird Gardens is a beautiful, tranquil haven at any time of the year. Visit in autumn to enjoy a vibrant tapestry of rich colours and textures within the Gardens and in the surrounding landscape. Open every day, from dawn to dusk.

Address **Patterdale Road, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1NP**
Tel **015394 46008** Web **holehirdgardens.org.uk**



3 BODENHAM ARBORETUM

Often described as Worcestershire's hidden garden, Bodenham Arboretum and Farm is an oasis of plantations, pools and avenues, beautifully landscaped with over 3,000 species of trees and shrubs from all over the world. Our Restaurant serves hot meals – including our own Herefordshire beef, lamb and pork as well as other home-made produce.

Email **info@bodenham-arboretum.co.uk**
Tel **01562 852444** Web **bodenhamarboretum.co.uk**

4 GILBERT WHITE'S HOUSE

Gilbert White was a passionate gardener as well as a pioneering naturalist. His 25-acre garden is a perfect blend of natural beauty and 18th century refinement. The gardens and grounds are surrounded by the great Selborne Hanger a beech woodland that creates a burst of autumn colour from every direction.

Email **info@gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk**
Web **gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk**

5 BASILDON PARK

As autumn begins, the Parkland and gardens at Basildon Park transform into a riot of oranges, reds and hues of yellow as the leaves change. Experience the woodland walk lit up from October onwards and the changing colours of the trees through the season.

Web **nationaltrust.org.uk/basildon-park**
Address **Basildon Park, Lower Basildon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9NR**

6 WATERPERRY GARDENS

Waterperry Gardens – a place to explore, relax and shop in beautiful surroundings all year round. Celebrate Apple Weekend at Waterperry – 6, 7 & 8 October. Apple and juice tastings, identification, expert advice and information about growing fruit trees, orchard tours and more. *Opening times: 10am to 5.30pm*

Address **Waterperry Gardens, Near Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1JZ**
Tel **01844 339226** Web **waterperrygardens.co.uk**

7 HERGEST CROFT GARDENS

A garden for all seasons with over 90 champion trees and shrubs has a riot of reds and yellows starting in September all planted in over 70 acres. Six different types of gardens are a blaze of colour throughout the autumn. A Plant Fair is held on Sunday 15 October 10.30am-4.30pm. *Open until end of October 12-5.30pm*

Address **Kington, Herefordshire HR5 3EG**
Tel **01544 230160** Web **hergest.co.uk**

©National Trust Images\Arnhel de Serra

8 OSTERLY PARK

Osterley Park and House is one of the last surviving country estates in London. As the long summer evenings draw to a close, the gardens at Osterley begin to take on their glorious autumn hues. Enjoy a stroll round the gardens at this special time of year or relax in the surrounding parkland.

Address **Jersey Road, Isleworth, London TW7 4RB**
Tel **020 8232 5050** Web **nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park**

9 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Visit our tranquil nine-acre woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb autumn colour! Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

Address **Annwell Lane, Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA**
Tel **01530 413700** Web **bluebellnursery.com**

10 THE GARDEN HOUSE

The Garden House sets a valley of Devon alight each autumn, as the Acer Glade shimmers with reds, coppers and golds. All around the ten acre garden, autumn colours flow, and the air is scented with cinder toffee from the towering Cercidiphyllum japonicum. *Open 7 days a week until October 31st. 10.30am to 5pm*

Address **The Garden House, Buckland Monachorum, Yelverton, Devon.**
Tel **01822 854769** Web **thegardenhouse.org.uk**

11 LUKESLAND GARDENS

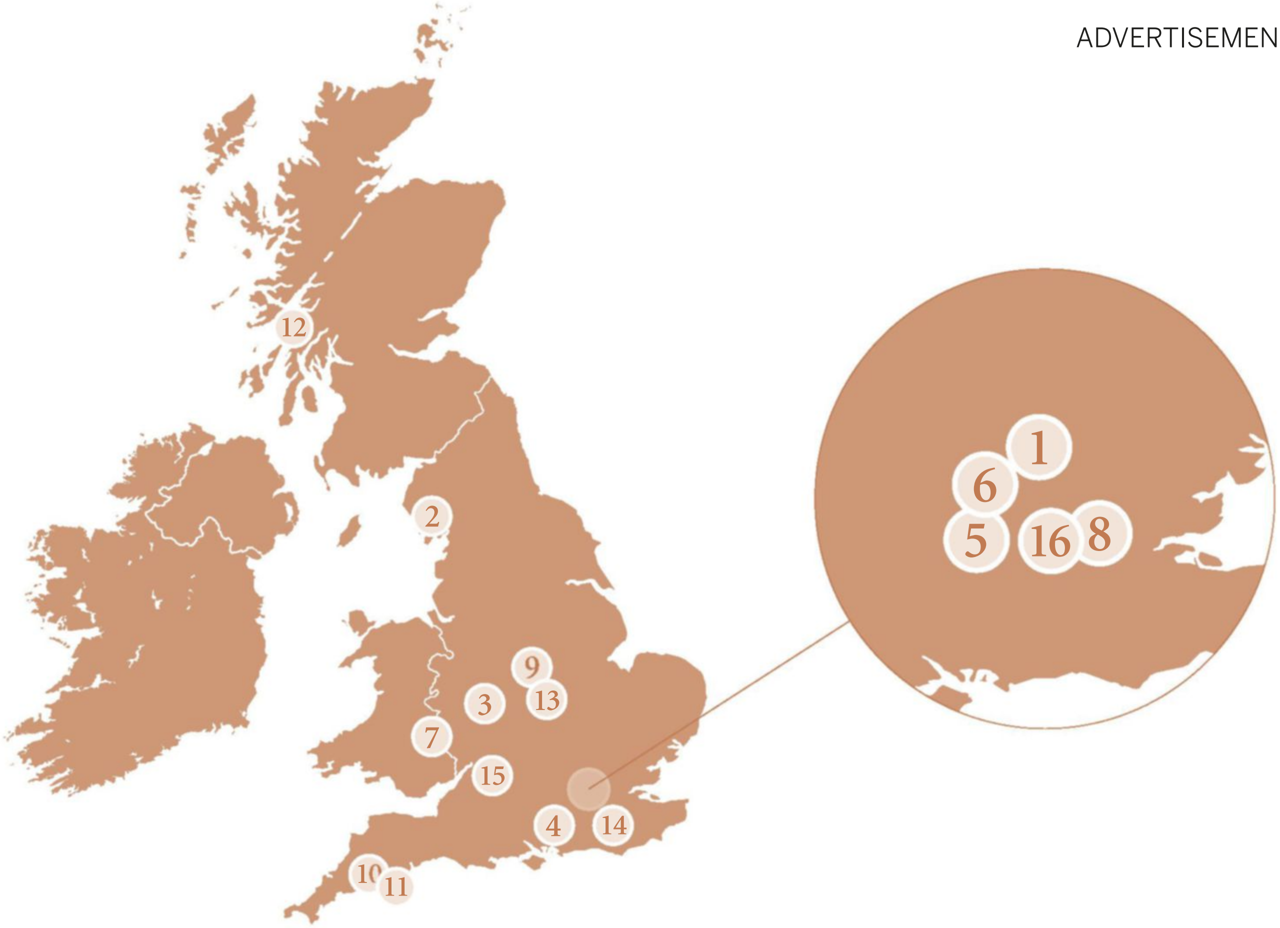
Family-run Lukesland Gardens, near Ivybridge, South Devon, offer 25 acres of glorious autumn colour. A mature collection of trees and shrubs including acers, cornus, ginkgo, cercidiphyllum, enkianthus and swamp cyprus reflect their reds and golds in the pools of the Addicombe Brook. Delicious home-made soups and cakes are served in the Old Billiard Room. Dogs are welcome on a lead and entry for children is free. Lukesland Gardens are open on Sundays and Wednesdays from 8 October to 12 November from 11am-5pm.

Tel **01752 691749**
Web **lukesland.co.uk**

12 ARDMADDY CASTLE GARDENS

Ardmaddy Castle Gardens, in a most spectacular setting, surround the Walled Garden with magnificent rhododendrons, collection of unusual and rare shrubs and plants, Clock Garden with cutting flowers, Crevice Garden, fruit and veg grown with labour-saving formality – all within dwarf box hedging. Beyond, a woodland walk with 18m hydrangea, water gardens.

Address **Nr Oban, Argyll PA34 4QY**
Tel **01852 300353** Web **ardmaddy.com**



13 KELMARSH HALL AND GARDENS

Visit us to celebrate the late summer season when the Dahlia Festival returns on 17 September and discover the historic Walled Garden, where the relaxed charm of the gardeners design shines. The remarkable Palladian-style Hall will be open, alongside a programme of specially-themed events. *Open until 31 October, Sunday and Tuesday-Thursday, 11am-5pm.*

Address **Kelmarsh Hall, Kelmarsh, Northamptonshire NN6 9LY**
Tel **01604 686543** Web **kelmarsh.com**

14 HEVER CASTLE AND GARDENS

Autumn is the season when Hever's striking trees come to the fore. Colour abounds with vivid maples and brilliant beech. Boston ivy scrambles up the Castle walls while Vitis coignetiae cloths bridges and pergolas with crimson. Visit on a still day for the very best views of reflections in the moats and lake.

Address **Hever, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 7NG**
Tel **01732 865224** Web **hevercastle.co.uk**

15 BOWOOD HOUSE & GARDENS

Bowood House & Gardens in Wiltshire; home to the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne. Behind the Georgian house, through a secret door, is their beautiful Walled Garden, offering guided tours throughout the season. £34 per person, includes a two-course lunch in the Stables Restaurant. 2 August, 18 August, 6 September, 4 October. Quote 'Gardens Illustrated' and receive 20% off!

Address **Derry Hill, Calne,
Wiltshire SN11 9PQ**
Tel **01249 812102** Web **bowood.org**

16 HAM HOUSE & GARDEN

The kitchen garden at Ham House is celebrating over 300 years of English salad this summer. You are invited to see, learn about and taste the leaves, buds, roots, shoots and flowers – over 35 ingredients – that would have made up the 17th century's dining 'showstopper' – the grand salad.

Address **Ham St, Richmond-upon-Thames, Surrey TW10 7RS**
Tel **020 8940 1950**
Web **nationaltrust.org.uk/
ham-house-and-garden**

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Nursery Collection

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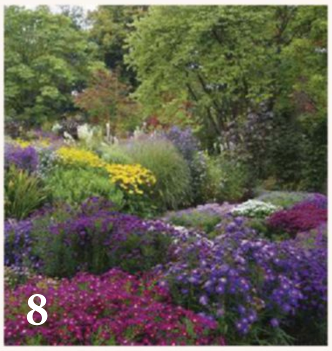

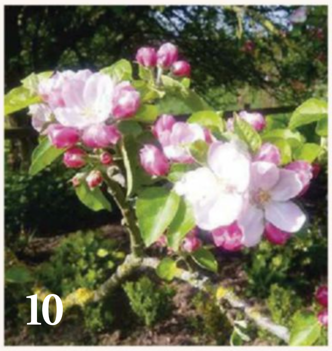

Image: Clive Nichols

1. KEN MUIR

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kenmuir.co.uk | 01255 830181

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harespringcottageplants.co.uk | 07792 376805

3. THORNCROFT CLEMATIS NURSERY

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thorncroftclematis.co.uk | 01953 850407

4. BOTANY PLANTS

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botanyplants.co.uk | info@botanyplants.co.uk

5. WOOTTENS OF WENHASTON

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woottensplants.com | 01502 478 258

6. SPRING REACH NURSERY

Visit Surrey's finest nursery. We have the finest-quality, home-grown plants. Our fantastic range includes clematis, trees, hedging, fruit, shrubs, perennials, climbers and grasses, all backed by expert advice.

springreachnursery.co.uk | 01483 284769

7. PENNARD PLANTS

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pennardplants.com | 01749 860039

8. OLD COURT NURSERIES

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autumnasters.co.uk | 01684 540416

9. DAISY CLOUGH NURSERIES

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daisyclough.com | 01524 793104

10. TREES DIRECT LTD

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treesdirect.co.uk | 01584 878878

11. TWELVE NUNNS

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twelvenunns.co.uk | 01778 590455

12. BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Specialists in hardy trees, shrubs and climbers including a huge selection of unusual species and varieties. Informative website and a reliable mail order service is available.

bluebellnursery.com | 01530 413700

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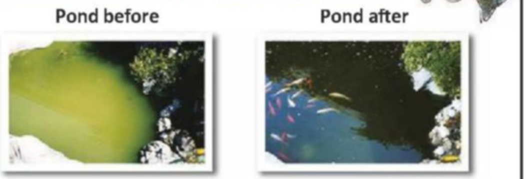

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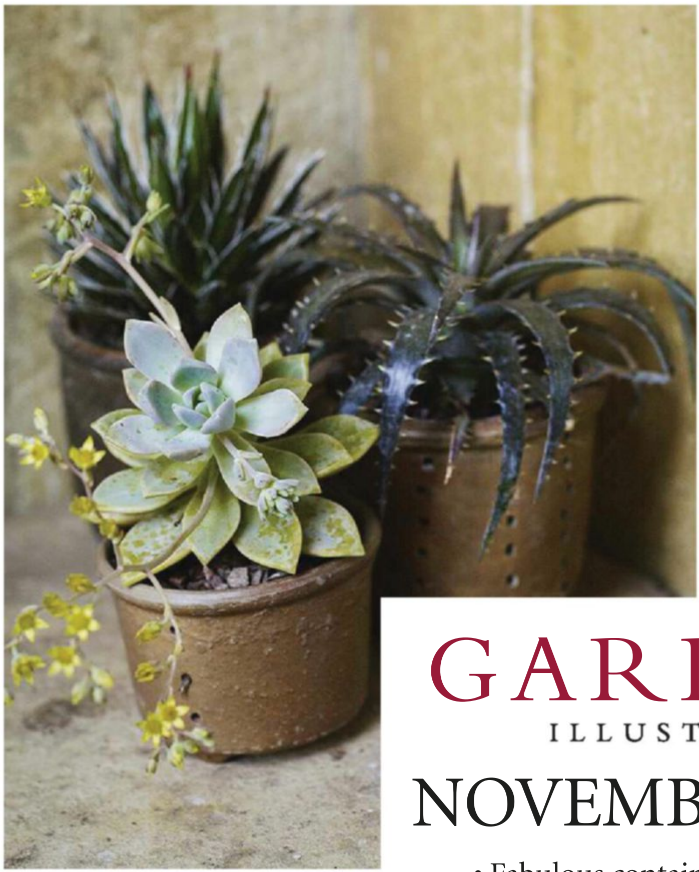

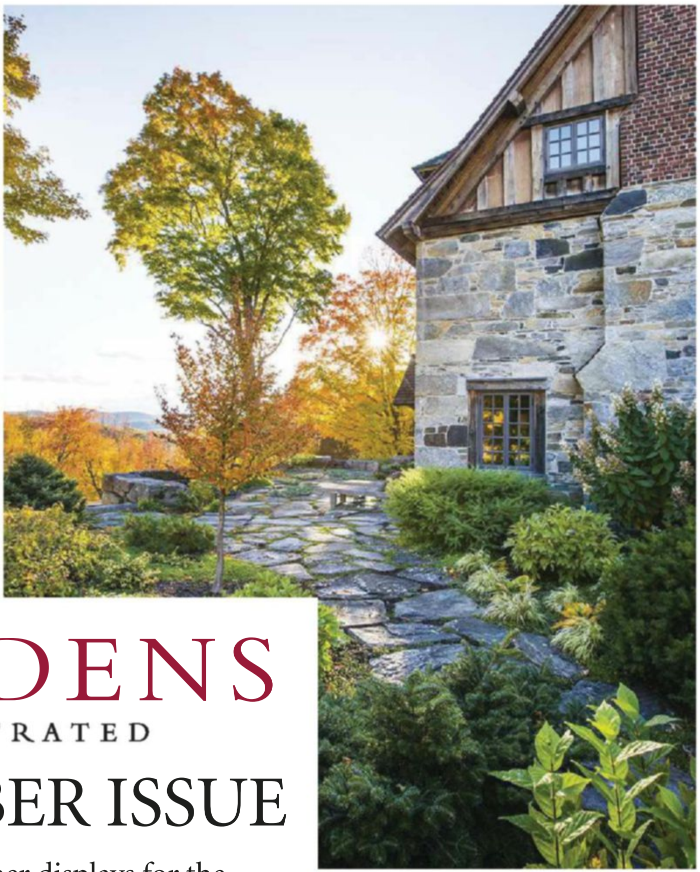

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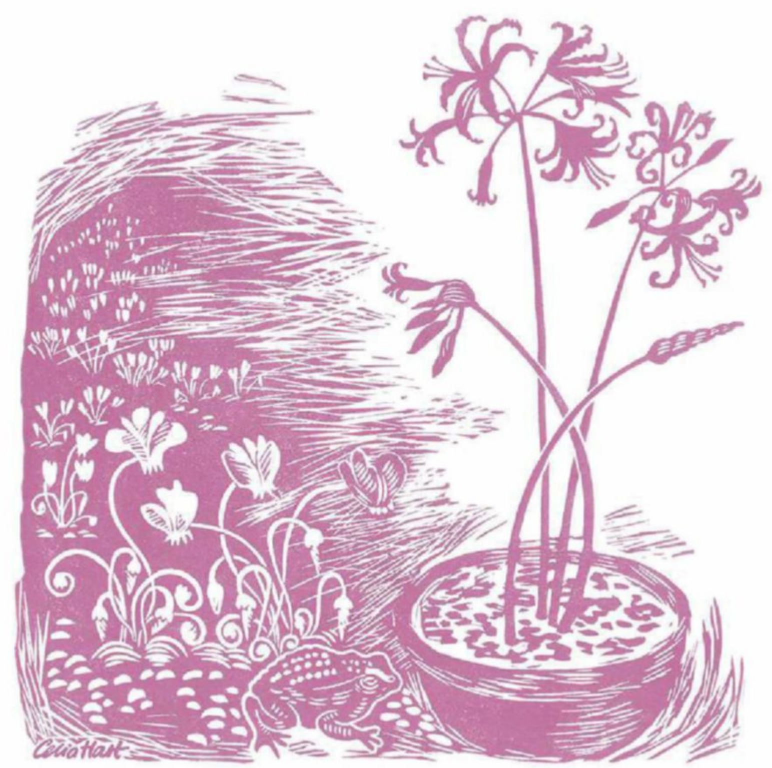
Final fling

While at this time of year most of us are scrambling to buy and plant out bulbs for spring, Frank finds time to stop and marvel at the beauty of autumn bulbs and corms

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**

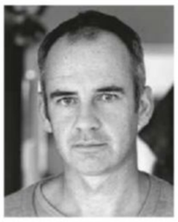
Autumn is a manic time for bulbs. Either you are bulb rich and time poor and unopened boxes are sitting in the boot room, or you haven't ordered enough or ordered in time and friends are making you jealous with reports of their unopened boxes and now you are trawling the internet for the last 50 of anything acceptable in existence. It is all about spring and our imaginations have leap-frogged the winter months. It is not that we are unaware of October's charm, but we look up to the glowing trees and across to the burning horizons to see them. It is swansong in our minds when, really, the plants themselves have no such philosophy.



We associate bulbs and spring because that is when they have the bare earth to themselves

Perhaps we associate bulbs and spring because that is when they have the bare earth to themselves. Now it is all a little bit fusty and decayed at ground level and it is a hard task for a mere crocus to freshen a summer's growth decaying. But that is simply a matter of presentation, which is our job and not that of the bulb. When autumn bulbs are done well there is nothing better.

First to come are the colchicums, so early that their time is really late summer. To refer to them as autumn crocuses is misleading, since they are allied to the lilies, while crocuses come under the iris umbrella. If you really need a common name for them, naked boys is the least resistible. The favourite is the extremely vulgar double called 'Waterlily', which adorns the freshly shorn meadow in increasing quantities. Tasteful intentions to acquire more refined and unusual species come to nothing when it comes to pressing the order button. Why have one bulb of some exquisite thing that might not like you when, for the same price, you can have five old friends who love you? And if you pick them for the house, where they look really astonishing, it will only encourage them, like sweet peas, to make more.



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire.

As soon as the colchicums are finished the meadow is given another cut if at all possible, to allow the actual autumn crocuses to look their best. There are various species to be had but, so far, I've stuck to the saffron crocus, *C. sativus*. It likes me and it increases and I like it having the meadow to itself. It is a good purple, beautifully enhanced by the saffron stamens, which I've yet to attempt to pick and dry. If there were another bit of meadow I'd like to give *C. vallicola* a go, purely because of a night spent sleeping on a carpet of them, high in the Kaçkar Mountains, long ago. Practically, it would probably be better to try *C. scharojanii*, which comes from wetter and lower and is a better colour (deep yellow to the other's white), but a romantic association is hard to shake.

I've yet to be really serious about nerines. The only one I've managed to keep is a 'Zeal Giant', which was a present from a proper plantsperson and has to live in a pot because I don't dare condemn it to the fate of all the others that have vanished over the years. It is almost certainly my fault for not choosing the correct sites and I need to think about better ones (the foot of the south-facing wall in the fruit garden is screaming "Here!"). 'Mark Fenwick' is one I've always been inclined towards, though having mostly admired it in the west of Scotland it might be safer to persist with ordinary *N. bowdenii*.

And then there are the heartbreaking cyclamens of autumn. I have no idea why they are so touching; perhaps because the nodding heads have little ears or because all year you have been accidentally disturbing the toad-like corms and resetting them with fingers crossed. Or because of their valiant struggle with autumn debris. The only solution is to plant more and yet more until we are overwhelmed from below by *Cyclamen hederifolium*. ☐

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